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JÖRGENSEN

An Autobiography

VOL. II

JÖRGENSEN

AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY

VOLUME TWO

Translated from the Danish by
INGEBORG LUND

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IN THE WAY WITH THE ADVERSARY

Tu es seul ! Prends garde à Dieu !
Tu es seul en face de Lui !

ALFRED DE MUSSET.

I

THEN Signor Giovanni left Assisi and Umbria and came to Toscana and Firenze.

Goethe reckoned the beginning of a new life from the day on which he arrived in Rome—his Roman birthday. A hundred years later the dividing line for pilgrims from the North was probably rather that on which they stood for the first time face to face with the bronze doors of Ghiberti and felt that here and now began their *Vita Nuova*.

It was on the evening of October 25th, 1894, that I stepped for the first time out of the railway station in Florence and, on the other side of the station square, saw Santa Maria Novella—its arcades of black and white marble—and its pointed spire etched against the blue evening sky. Carrying my small canvas valise in my hand, I walked down the Via Cerretani under the large electric arc lamps, reached the Piazza del Duomo and saw the Baptistry for the first time, and the Cathedral behind the Baptistry, and beside the Cathedral Giotto's tower, and above the Cathedral the tile-roofed dome of Brunelleschi. How many times was I not to return and see this sight, and how did I not long to see it again, although only six hours' railway journey away from it !

Like all Danes at that time (at any rate all Danish artists) I lived at the Casa Nardini in the Cathedral

square, taking my meals, at Mogens Ballin's recommendation, at Paoli's, in the Via dei Cerchi. As soon as I had washed, therefore, I went out, passed for the first time the newspaper stall at the corner of the Via Calzajoli, for the first time set foot on the Piazza Signoria and saw the Palazzo Vecchio and Arnolfo's tower, which rears itself up with the threatening gesture of a lifted gauntlet. After supper at Paoli's ("a delightful, reliable place, where the host himself, his hat on his head, is seated opposite to me, enjoying his evening salad") costing the fabulous price of one lira twenty-five centesimi, down to the Arno.

The first meeting with the Arno, the first meeting with that little narrow, yellow river, which in whirling eddies and smooth as oil, flows in under the Ponte Vecchio and runs down towards the Ponte della Trinità and the Ponte Carraja, the beautiful bridges with the long, pure-lined arches stretched across the stream. . . . For the first time I stand leaning against the parapet opposite the statue of Giovanni delle Bande Nere and see beyond the river the lights on the Piazzale Michelangelo and a faint gleam upon the marble façade of San Miniato. . . . And I stand there a long while, as though with a presentiment of the future this town and I are to have together, at length tearing myself away and going home through streets where newsboys are crying the *Fieramosca* and old men offering *cerini* for sale, and I cannot sleep, this first night in Firenze, for the sound of cabs and of people down below on the asphalted streets of the city, and for a faint and remote perfume in the small carpeted room, so far away from the mattresses of maize leaves and the whitewashed cell in La Rocca.

The next morning—ah, that first morning in Firenze! A clear, sunny autumn morning, and I was not yet twenty-seven! "I wake up to a clear and beautiful day," says the diary. "I go downstairs, talk with Signor

Nardini, who compliments me on my Italian, drink coffee at six soldi in the Café Rosa. Outside the open doors of the café the sun gleams on the marble of the Baptistry; ladies pass by in red and green dresses; I feel as though I am penetrated by a new life.

"Then I went over and looked at Ghiberti's bronze doors, and it was as in a fairy tale. I went on, saw Donatello's Saint George at the corner of Or San Michele (I am reminded of the small reproduction of it on Georg Brandes' writing-table), came to the Piazza Signoria with Benvenuto Cellini's Perseus and the equestrian statue of Cosmo de' Medici and the Palazzo Vecchio in the sun against a clouded atmosphere. And it was as in a fairy tale.

"I went on and came through the arcades of the Uffizi to the Arno. Again the Ponte Vecchio was there, distant mountains looked blue and San Miniato flashed upon its hill behind funereally dark cypresses.

"I went along the light, sheltered Lungarno, past shops with books and shops with jewels (bowls full of precious stones in the windows!), and I came at length to Santa Maria Novella. I saw the Spanish chapel with the frescoes of Taddeo Gaddi and Simone Martini, and in the church the chapel of the Strozzi with Orcagna's Heaven and the chancel with Ghirlandajo's long, pale virgins. And it was as in a fairy tale.

"And when towards noon I stepped into il Duomo, all the windows blazed sombrely, and in the cool darkness I knelt before the high altar, and above the altar there was a window with two young saints in deacons' vesture, one in burning red and one in glowing green, and the church was cool and dark and quiet. And it was as in a fairy tale.

"At Paoli's the landlord recognised me from the evening before—his name is Sor Francesco!—I had a meal which cost me only 1 lira 45, amongst handsome workmen, and I am now sitting in the Café Rosa writing

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this, and am as happy as if I were living in a fairy tale."

I stayed a week in Firenze and in that week I saw all that a traveller from the North usually sees: the Uffizi and Palazzo Pitti, San Marco, the Accademia, the chapel of the Medici, Museo Nazionale, Carmine, Santa Croce. On my own account I went to the Cascine, Shelley's Cascine, where the Ode to the West Wind was written. In the late, still warm October sun all the flower beds were flaming with red fuchsias, violet petunias, blue asters, mauve heliotrope, and after a long ramble beneath the dark, bright-leaved sessile-flowered oaks, the tall, ivy-grown elms, I found my way out to the Arno, brighter and broader here than under the bridges, flowing quietly along behind rows of slender poplars and disappearing away through Tuscany, against a blue mountain ridge far away.

Shelley accompanied me on my Florentine walks—Shelley and the other English Florentine, Robert Browning. Out there in the Cascine, under the trees whose whispering he too had so often heard, I read his *Men and Women*, and seemed to recognise myself in Andrea del Sarto. Andrea measured himself against Raphael, against Michel Angelo—and in bitter truthfulness found that they were greater than he. I had also those against whom I measured myself—and were they not greater than I?—Was it not of me and of himself that the Florentine painter said in the English verse: "The will is somewhat, somewhat too the power"—adding in self-contempt: "*And thus we half-men struggle*"? Was not this the very judgment passed upon me, that I was a half-man—did not this, too, explain my religion? Had I to confess with del Sarto that life had been too strong and too brilliant for me—that I was a bat, unable to endure the light of the sun?

Too live the life grew, golden and not grey,
And I'm the weak-eyed bat no sun should tempt . . . .

One afternoon I climbed up to Fiesole. I had a letter of introduction from Verkade to one of the Fathers in the Franciscan monastery there. It was the last day of October, the Eve of All Saints. "The day is mild and cloudy, with a sweet scent of southern autumn. The last grapes are being gathered, over the brown soil of the vineyards the branches hang mauve and bare, with here and there a few golden leaves." Of the visit to the monastery the diary has only these lines: "The cypress wood of the monastery. It is cool and quiet and afternoon. Above the mountains the sky is palely blue with silver-grey clouds, faintly rose-tinged towards evening. Dusk is falling, shade and coolness and a scent of soil rise up from the green undergrowth. The tops of the cypresses golden in the sun, and far out the mauve mountains, the white towns and the ringing of a church bell."

From the monastery I went down to the Hotel Aurora and had supper there, alone on the big terrace with a view over Firenze. Afterwards I drank my coffee with a glass or two of green chartreuse in the summer-house at the outermost end of the terrace. In large letters and crooked lines, as when one writes in darkness, the diary has these notes: "The leaves of the acacias are black and sharp against the evening sky, as on a picture by Leonardo. The cypresses of the monastery at Fiesole are outlined against the golden evening air. Down in the valley the electric lights of Firenze are shining silver bright in the violet dusk, and the waters of the Arno flash out through the country like pieces of pink glass. Away behind the mountains the sky glows and burns, but high up above the almost leafless arbour the first star glitters like a Christmas star. I hear the children of Fiesole playing while I sit writing this, in loneliness, at a cool stone table in the twilight."

II

Then Signor Giovanni left Firenze, left Tuscany, left Italy—"From six in the morning till four in the afternoon from Firenze to Verona (Price 6 lira). . . . Prato—morning clouds over the mountains, hoar frost in the grass. North of Pistoja huge mountains, at first entirely wooded, then bare, red, with groves of pine as on Ghiberti's reliefs, finally grey, quite grey, a country in grey. Terzo, a romantic village amongst mountains. But onward, onward to the north, along the banks of cold little rivers shivering under a sky suddenly grown pale. Vine fields of flaming gold. The Po. Rococo-looking Mantua. Flat country, reminding one of Denmark. Snow mountains ahead—I remember when I said good-bye to them in June, at Isola del Cantone—and feel that Italy is behind me now.

"In Verona the German train, which is warmed up. Evening glow over vine fields in autumnal gold. Into the great, solemn, violet Alps. Ala—German is spoken at the table. Austrian money and soldierly guards on the train. Night journey through the Alps. At one place in a small town a large house, brilliantly lit, and through the uncurtained windows I look into a festive room where a great many people are sitting at table, and at the middle of one table a man in evening dress, standing with his glass raised and calling a toast—for whom? for what? Onward, onward. A mountain stream roars out in the night, a river swirls white alongside the train between the clefts of the rocks. Mists are dancing somewhere in the depths like ghosts. Franzensfeste—stars high up between black mountain ridges. Innsbruck—I still say, *Conié?* and *Grazie!* instead of *Wie* and *Schönen Dank!*, and at the *buffet* at Ingolstadt I ask for a *pannino*, not a *Brötchen*. The last Italian words in Munich to a young Dalmatian who has travelled with me to *Monaco di Bavaria*.

"Nov. 4. No morning toilet, but coffee and train. Winter fogs over the fields. Warmth everywhere indoors. And I am wearing a light-coloured hat!

"Mists and bogs, and crows and plains and flat rivers. Fir-woods—it looks as if the tree-trunks a long way in were running as fast as they could. Thüringerwald—black houses with slate roofs between black forests and dark grey or pale grey mountains. Commercial travellers in the carriage—conversation about train speed, time tables, life insurance, electric plant. This immense Germany, through which one goes on working one's way. Gera, Halle—large, brilliant places where North Germans exist. At last, at eleven p.m., after a journey of sixteen hours, Berlin—brilliant, asphalted, swarming with human beings and meaningless like the fore-court of hell.

"Here I am stopped in my journey—there is no connection to Warnemünde until to-morrow. I sit in a little back room in a small hotel near the Stettiner Bahnhof and write this. In an interior vision I see before me the kitchen of La Rocca, Ballin sitting at the end of the table, Eugenio going to and fro between the table and the fire-place. I hear Rosina singing: '*Non si fa più l'amor con te, carina.*' How far away it all is all at once, so irrecoverably far away!

"Nov. 5. Journey home. From Berlin to Rostock. Talk with a young Italian who is going into service at a castle in Mecklenburg. The first Danish—so mild and modestly quiet. A 'Farvel' at the train as we stopped a Nyköbing station—so quiet and gentle and hushed i sadness.

"Nov. 6. Home-coming last night to the new home, not far from where Stuckenberg once lived. A home-coming to flowers and light and happiness—a home-coming as though to the very house of Life."

III

And so Signor Giovanni was back in Denmark and in Copenhagen again and was to begin living in the old surroundings amongst the old friends. The editorship of "The Tower" was given back to me and I succeeded, almost alone, in still filling a few numbers of this periodical before the publisher wisely let it cease coming out. At P. G. Philipsen's I published *Bekendelse*,[1] a collection of poems which had already been accepted earlier, with the addition of a wreath of sonnets, "Chaldæa," written in Assisi, and the closing poem, *Confiteor*. This last part of the book aroused great interest in Catholic circles in Denmark, and through my uncle in Svendborg, who had in his youth been tutor to the Rosenörn-Lehns at Hvidkilde, I obtained an invitation to call on Baroness Polyxène Rosenörn-Lehn, née Pechlin, who was a convert and spent her winters in Copenhagen near Saint Ansgar's church in Bredgade. The wise and well-read old lady, who soon became a motherly friend to me, put some questions to me concerning certain expressions in one of my sonnets and from her well-stocked Catholic library lent me works by Gratry, Lammenais, de Maistre, Stolberg. Ballin, who in his solitude at La Rocca had received *Bekendelse*, wrote that the only Christianity he had found in it consisted in the lines of Latin hymns which I had used as mottoes, and he warned me urgently not to walk up and down any longer outside the open door of the Church, but to take the decisive step and go inside. "It was for our souls that Jesus thirsted on the Cross," wrote my pious friend. "Do not let Him go on thirsting for you."

Nevertheless—strange as it may sound—that was just what I continued to do, keeping up this spiritual exercise, this religious to and fro with which Ballin

[1] Confession.

reproached me. I kept on walking down side-tracks away from the road to Damascus. Thus at one time I thought I had found in Carlyle the prophet of the true God—"the living God, the real God, the God of Israel, the God of Jesus, the only true God of humanity! To believe in Him is the root of all good; not to believe in Him, in His real, awful presence, is the original cause of all evil, for the individual as for the generation, for me as for all! (Jan. 8, 1895. At midnight in snowy weather, after a day spent in gentle affection and in striving after the fulfilment of duty.)"

But it is not always easy to do one's duty, and Carlyle's words: *Love not pleasure, love God*, are easy to write, but difficult to live. And one winter evening in my tiny cabin-like study under the roof of the small two-storey house in Hallinsgade (even the stairs up to it were steep like the stairs on board a ship), just as I was at work on an article about Schopenhauer's *Doctrine of Grace* for *The Tower*, Sophus Claussen[1] came in, fresh from Paris. I had just written down the lines: "The turning away from the world of the finite will to the infinite will, which is God, is due to the influence of the latter on the former, that is, of Grace (Charity), which is the incarnation of the eternal, spiritual will in the flesh of the finite will." Then there was a knock at the door and on the threshold stood my far-travelling friend, who had idled away the autumn on the Boulevard Saint Michel and had now returned home to Denmark by way of modern Berlin.

"Claussen came," says the diary, "looking handsome and elegant, broad-browed, with intelligent eyes and many good, striking expressions: 'nails that could pick up needles,' and the like. He was *the world* in the highest degree—with his amorous adventures in Italy and Paris, his singing and his speaking French and Italian, his trained diction, his French and Scandinavian acquain-

[1] See footnote, Vol. 1, p. 98.

tances in good sets, his stories from Bohemian taverns in Berlin about Strindberg and Christian Krogh and Thomas P. Krag and 'old Bengt in Helsingfors, August Strindberg's epigone in Sweden'—everything, Verlaine included, assumed a pronounced worldliness, seemed to become so strangely akin, grew into waves in one, large abounding fulness, in which he disported himself like a happy and laughing Triton. And everything of mine grew so pale and shadowy—I felt it—and it was felt. When he went out into the clear, starlit night, my wife and I remained standing at the garden gate watching him. Everything about us had become so mean. My wife was almost in tears and said to me: 'Why do you never laugh? And why do you always sit reading books?' I could not give any answer. Is my Christianity a postulate of my impotence? Is happiness really earthly, and is it only the feeble who seek it in heaven? All at once it seems to me that Claussen possesses all the essential, I all the unessential. Has *he* not obtained something quite different and something more from Italy than I? He possesses the close, strong, tireless force of life itself. While I am not even able to earn the money for my boy's clothes and my own winter coat. Floating in the beyond seems to me to be the only thing worthy of me—because it is the easiest? Oh God, is this true? Then my *Confiteor* will be the most horrible of all lies?"

This doubt had started up already in Firenze—the most dreadful one for a religious life, because it is laid like an axe at the root of religion itself. *Darum sei der Mensch ein Einwohner seiner selbst und lasse sein Ausjagen und Aussuchen.* I had taken these words of Tauler for my guide and lived according to them, saw hardly anyone, read but few new books, scarcely a newspaper, lived only for my pondering and seeking. Besides Carlyle and the Catholic authors from Baroness Rosenörn-Lehn's library I studied Schopenhauer, revised Darwin, ploughed through and made excerpts from Frazer's

The Golden Bough. "From the earnestness with which I carry on this search" (says the diary), "I feel how deeply important it is for my soul to find the truth—the *right* doctrine and the *right* life. I feel this search to be my highest duty, from which no predilection—not even for the Catholic form of worship—must draw me away." (Jan. 20, 1895.)

As the interpolated remark shows, I thought I had to be on my guard against the impressions from Italy, the memories of Assisi and La Rocca. I went to a Catholic church on Our Lady's feast in December—but not at Christmas. January came, with cold weather, driving snow, with economic difficulties. Principles like Tauler's do not exactly lead to earning money as a journalist (and one cannot live on the proceeds of an occasional collection of poems). The daily paper *Dannebrog* would willingly take articles from me and there was also some talk about a position on the staff of a radical provincial paper. But I felt incapable of journalistic work. "I am haunted" (confesses the diary), "by a continual dread of my religiosity being a desertion from duty, desertion from truth and life." A visit with Claussen to the Stuckenbergs[1] in Lyngby increased and deepened this dread. It was on January 27th, 1895. The Stuckenbergs received us with kindness and we three men went for a walk along the frozen Lyngby road, where the crows were squawking over the snowfields as in the winters of our youth, and the snow sang beneath our tread. While we were out walking the two women had arrived at a settlement—my wife and Ingeborg Stuckenberg—who had not wanted to come out with us; from a feeling of duty my wife had defended my change of standpoint, which Ingeborg attacked. There was an oppressive silence when we three men, hungry after our walk, and in high spirits after the frosty air, came back and gaily expressed our need of a speedy and generous meal. In

[1] See footnote, Vol. I, p. 98.

order to shorten the time of waiting, Claussen sat down at the piano and began to sing some of his French songs. Ingeborg stood motionless behind the chair on which I had sat down—suddenly she stooped forward, seized my hands and violently bent my fingers backwards: "Oh, Johs, I should like to break your fingers so that they could never write another line!"—"Why, *Ingeborg!*" said Viggo peaceably. Ingeborg dropped my hand and stood a moment without moving; in her deathly pale face her blue eyes flamed their contempt, their hatred, their love upon me, all that which had been our youth in common, and which I had now betrayed. My wife and I left before supper, we could no longer break bread with the friends we had lost. I never heard Ingeborg Stuckenberg's voice again, only once did I see her from a long way off. Once at a café in Frederiksberg Avenue where I was drinking my morning coffee and she came in with Viggo. I bowed and she only just bent her head. And one last time one autumn day in the Oersted Park. She was sitting on a bench and gazing straight in front of her, lost in thought. She was wearing a long, fawn-coloured coat, of the kind she liked to wear, her head was bent and I saw the pure profile of her face etched against the grey sky of the harvest day. There was no other path except that which led past her, and I walked on it as warily as I could. She did not look up, perhaps she did not notice at all that someone was passing. Shortly after, she left Denmark never to return. If I had had the courage that day to go to her, greet her, speak to her! But I knew her pride, even in her heart's uttermost need she would never have stretched out her hand for help. Stern, strong, proud Ingeborg, may God be merciful to your pure and truthful soul!

The Stuckenbergs lost, Claussen remote in his world of happiness, economic insecurity, distressful daily life without a servant (I did the shopping and helped in the housework), added to this the continual spinning

round in everlastingly the same thoughts and doubts like a squirrel in a treadmill—it can be understood that the diary shows outbursts like this :

"12.30, night. After having felt ill, with a flickering heart, physically ill right through, strangely near dying, after having been in bed and unable to sleep and tossing hither and thither, I get up and write :

"It seems to me to be indisputable that there is a world-principle which bestows blessedness on *those* who leave all things and deny themselves, and which fills the souls of such people with goodness, meekness and gentleness. The existence of this principle and the way to union with it was revealed by Christ (and perhaps by Buddha, about which I do not know anything).

"But I also find that there is nothing in this principle which can impel one to self-development and to production. It is a principle which draws the soul inward, thus, as seen from without, sterilising it.

"And I feel it to be cowardly and unworthy (though towards whom or what I do not know) to have recourse to this principle, because my nature is mean and because I have not been fortunate in life. If I were a genius or the son of a king, and *then* renounced—— But now it is as though I adorned the poverty of my inmost nature with the giving up of something it is easy to relinquish.

"Perhaps God has sent me misfortune to let me feel the poverty of my nature (for I have never possessed more—but before it was enough for me !)—to make me seek Him and His fulness ?

"But on the other hand I know that there is earthly happiness for him who seeks it. I remember my joy over summer skies and white summer nights. And the joy of expression—the pure satisfaction of creating—that which I am enjoying in this lonely hour of the night, as I have done so often before——

"Is this the sustaining fulfilment then—the fulfilment of duty and fulfilment of nature in one—the fulcrum of

Archimedes, of Prometheus? *Hier sitz' ich, forme Menschen in meinem Bilde?* And *Wähntest du etwa, ich sollte das Leben hassen, in* Wüsten fliehen, *weil nicht alle Blütenträume reiften?* From this standpoint sickness or health, life or death are unessential, for the fulfilment of nature is understood as fulfilment of duty.

"Grant this to be right for the poet, for the artist. But the others? Does a murderer fulfil his duty by murdering, a thief his duty by stealing? Stuckenberg has been consistent enough to think so in *A Vagabond.*

"Or can morals only be realised through conflict with self, through asceticism? God be realised in those who have forsaken the real? God come to rule over earth by mankind leaving it? Man ascends, God descends instead—parallel with the Ascension as a condition of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit?

"This meaning, too, only partly satisfies me. But I feel less anxious, no longer so entirely empty. Here again, however, a human, active virtue has been effective—the need of knowledge—the cry of exiled human reason for eternal Reason which it gropes for and tries to comprehend."

IV

In this state of mind I began to write *Le Livre de la Route.* The diary for February 12th has this note: "Wrote Chapters XI, XII and XIII of *German Days.* An awakening of honesty which did me good." Those are the chapters in which I describe Eisenhut's wine tavern in Rothenburg ob der Tauber and am reminded of my youth with Börge Stuckenberg. The awakening of honesty I am speaking of was not, however, limited to those chapters only—the whole of the little book was borne up by the same need of getting to the bottom, making a clean breast of everything, of telling the whole truth, even if it were to come out through the bleeding

flesh or a torn heart. Thence came the continual double note, the old, dark, pain-filled one, and the new one, bright, silvery clear, the cry for Säntis, "mountain air, solitude, fragrance of wild, spicy plants," and the longing back to the wet villa roads of the past.

As the work progressed my mind grew calmer. The feeling of my own insignificance did not forsake me. But was it not that very mystic *Non sum*, that great "I am nothing," which, according to all spiritual teachers, was the beginning of the necessary condition for acquiring knowledge? Did not Tauler say: *Alle Menschen wollen dieses Wort* non sum *verleugnen, und aller Menschen Thun geht darauf, wie sie dies Wort verläugnen und verbergen. Sie wollen allen etwas seyn oder scheinen, es sey in Geist oder in der Natur.* In contrast to this, the great mystic explained, it was the wisdom of John the Baptist, when he was asked whether he was this or that, whether he was a prophet or even the Messiah, that he answered all questions with a truthful, "I am not." This was the truth about himself, and on the basis of this truth he became what he *could* become, not the Messiah and not a prophet, but the voice crying in the wilderness, *vox clamantis*. This—and this alone—was the vocation of the Baptist. And why should I forget that he was my patron saint? "This is the grace of God for me," says the diary, "that I am beginning to feel a *Non sum* in myself." After a meeting with old acquaintances: "My calmness on meeting H. and R.—my indifference to their friendship or contempt." (Feb. 16.) And one evening the long-forgotten rosary is taken out—*preghavo il rosario*—is the note, in incorrect Italian, in the diary.

About the last week in February the long, snow-filled winter came to an end. "Spring sun and spring joy—each new day that dawns seems to me to be wonderfully significant. It overflows with beauty, I go about in a dream, tired and intoxicated as though with wine." "The happiness with which the morning, the sunshine,

the spring fills one, is an effect of grace—*une grâce spéciale*, as Baudelaire says—with which we see a glimpse of God behind the world, the eternal God of light and life. But with God there is no evening, no darkness, no autumn. He is the everlasting morning, the everlasting sun, the unfading spring. And in Him alone do we find the happiness which is promised by the morning, the sunshine, the spring, by youth. For if we seek it in this world, we are disappointed and say bitterly, 'It was only a delusion.'"

But beauty is not a delusion, it is truth. It is only we who understand it amiss. It is an angel who will not yield to our embraces, but who will lead us to God. For Ixion it is the cloud, but the goddess for him who will not presumptuously lift its robe. (At three in the afternoon. In the scent of hyacinths and narcissi. Written as though under a revelation.)

On the same day, February 22nd, I completed *German Days* and some time elapsed before I began *An Umbrian Chronicle*, the second part of *Le Livre de la Route*. Meanwhile Stuckenberg had completed his novel, *Fair Words*, and sent it to me. I read it with a feeling of his superiority, of my own littleness: this was not mosaic work, like his and Claussen's and my own work hitherto, it was whole and great, forcible and manly. It was the work of a powerful and virile personality, one of those just ones who, according to the Gospel itself, "have no need of repentance." "But Christ has not come to them," the diary continues this meditation, "He came to the sinners, to the slaves of the natural will, to the plebeians who could not rise to the fulfilment of the law. That is my place—not amongst those aristocratic souls. *I am not of the nobility*, I am a plebeian.

"And God came down upon the earth to call *me* to repentance, to save *me*, because I was lost. God created *me*—a vessel of dishonour. He did not put me amongst the vases of human integrity. Oh, Thou great Potter,

Thou must then cleanse me and make of me a vessel for Thy love!

"In a way, oh God, I am a dupe. Thou hast enclosed me in unrighteousness, made me a sinner to force me to faith. But it may be so, Lord, that the just do not suffice Thee? *Thou needest sinners*—who can repent? Lord, Thou wilt perhaps ennoble me amongst Thine own? From being a poet of mankind wilt Thou make me a poet of God?

"But, Lord, how can my verses be any joy to Thee? Might I not just as well break stones on the road? Or dost Thou indeed want *verses* from me and not stones?"

This is the end of a soliloquy of ten pages in the diary, on March 24th. All the diaries of this period justly bear the title *anima anceps*—a two-minded soul. A few minutes later the other voice speaks:

"The one thing certain is that here I sit on this Sunday afternoon and hear it raining and raining outside from a grey sky. I am alone in the house and now and then I walk up and down a little in our three small attic rooms. I am strangely troubled, nervous, so that my hands tremble now and then. The one thing certain is that for a long while I have produced nothing, not a line of poetry, only this incessant diary. The certain thing is that I have now taken out my old Heine, which I had with me on that day at Gurre[1] in June, ten years ago, and that I read verses in it which I had almost forgotten:

Manchmal ists's mir, als hört' ich singen
die alten deutschen Nachtigallen—
Wie mich die Töne sanft umschlingen
Das sind nur Träume—sie verhallen.

Wo sind die Rosen, deren Liebe
mich einst beglückt? All ihre Blüthe
ist längst verwelkt. Gespenstisch trübe
spukt noch ihr Duft mir im Gemüthe. . . .

[1] See footnote, Vol. 1, p. 77.

"I let the book fall—it is as though I must weep over it."

And again the endless question is taken up for endless cogitation.

"Now when I examine myself before the face of my conscience, before the face of the God of life, is not my renunciation directed, not against my Self ('the hateful Ego,' as Carlyle calls it), but against my work? I disinterest myself in human beings and here in my solitude I give myself up to my predilection for reading and my tendency to pondering. Art, poetry, not to mention politics, become indifferent to me, it is impossible for me to earn my bread by writing because my own self occupies me wholly and entirely. What do I really sacrifice in order to find the truth? Do I not listen most to my self's need of spiritual peace and quiet? Do I not seek in religion a justification for being compliant, gentle, forgiving—*to let myself fall*—to be able with self-satisfaction to *despise* the world I have *envied* before? It does not seem to me that there is any longer an aim for my work. I could imagine myself a controversial writer for the Church. But if the Church did not need any controversial writers there would be nothing for me to do. And would such controversy, I wonder, be sustained by anything but envy? Sometimes there is within me a simmering anger which is not altogether selfless. Would I not become a scolder like Léon Bloy? Remember the motives of several forcible words in "The Tower" against *Politiken* and its men, there was a very egoistic power in them, an angry need of being something other than the Radicals, something more, something higher. There is a good deal of pride and puerile annoyance at the root of my Catholicism.

"But is it not true, then, that I have become *better?* Perhaps! Gentler, kinder, with no desire to go astray? Perhaps! I lay more stress on what I *am* than on what I *do*. I try to be good to those nearest to me, I try to be

truthful. I try, not to serve charity and truth outwardly, but to realise them inwardly.

"Is outward effort perhaps simply a part of that world which has to be renounced ? Then, to be logical, I must agree with Tolstoi in declaring art to be evil. Then my ideal must be to live simply, quietly, unnoticed—on work which is done *for the work's sake*, not for the sake of the result. Then, like the Carthusian monk, one may as well use one's books to light fires with, for work is only of value as renunciation, as self-discipline, as penance. Not the reverse, that self-discipline is necessary for the work and thus, only thus, acquires its value.

"Now which of these two sentences is the truly Christian one ? 'He who will save his life, let him lose it !' But who is it that gives up his life—he who devotes it to seeking the truth, to creating beauty, to preparing the way for the coming of an earthly kingdom of God ? Or he who only labours because it is a self-denial to him, and who will by this means make himself better, in the certainty that man's happiness is not dependent on scientific knowledge or on joy over beauty, but that everyone should only aim at denying himself, forsaking the world and thus attaining to happiness and peace ?

"Where is the true teaching of Christ in this ? Where is the true way to life ? For those who have gone astray and produce poisonous works have also given up their lives to that effort. Did they serve Satan, then ? Was it for him they sacrificed everything and died at the stake ?

"Oh, my God, my head is aching, my hands are trembling. *Anima anceps, anima anceps.* And I, who believed myself to be near the gates of the Church . . . ."

V

Seven months were yet to pass ere I knocked at those gates. When I read through the diaries of those seven months now, diaries kept while living in Hallinsgade,

during a summer spent in Vejle and in Svendborg, then again in Copenhagen, the first words that occur to me are the sneering ones of Mephistopheles : "A fellow who ponders is like an animal led hither and thither by an evil spirit over the dry heath, while all around it there are beautiful green meadows." As so often before, the devil was here speaking the truth— it *was* an evil spirit that kept on leading me round the same monotonous ring of thought, while the green meadow of truth could have been reached by a single leap out of the charmed circle. But the circle in which I continued to revolve, like a horse in the round of a threshing-machine, fortunately never returned exactly to the point from which it started. There was a faint but even ascent in my orbit, so that I moved in a spiral instead of in a ring. I returned to the same points of doubt continually, but on a plane which was above the level of the previous round ; I passed the same stones of stumbling continually, but a little higher up. At last the spiral led me above them and I escaped at the top, was saved from the hopeless circle.

During those seven months there were days on which, as at La Rocca, I clearly saw the way of salvation : "Believe the Church and obey the Church, there is nothing more and everything is included in it. And charity impels me to it. I *want* to be good. I *want* to obey God. And the certain, infallible way of doing it is to believe the Church and obey her. Nothing can be simpler. The Church believes and teaches the truth, the Church knows and teaches duty. The Church knows duty because she possesses the truth. Therefore believe what the Church says, obey the commandments of the Church and you have the truth and the life. This is the unshakeable foundation : believe the Church because her commandments lead to life and salvation and are therefore true. The truth is given by the Church, it is not to be arrived at by my efforts of thought." "Only by wholly giving up intellectual pride, only by com-

pletely blotting out selfness, only by renouncing all intellectually satisfying theory (which does not make man one whit better), only by complete surrender to charity, by uncompromising faith in the Church of Christ and the revealed truth in it leading to peace and salvation—thus only is life gained, thus only does the good conquer in man, and *charity*, for whose sake we have sacrificed reason in the obedience of faith, can rule."

These words were written down on the feast of the Annunciation, March 25th. Thereupon I look up Goffine's prayer-book, which Verkade had given me at Beuron, and in it I find the gospel reading for the day, the story about the man who, face to face with Jesus, exclaims: "Lord, I believe, help thou my unbelief." And I repeat this prayer: "Lord, I believe, help my unbelief! Work the miracle of changing my self-sick heart so that with all my soul I can love Thee and believe in Thee. Lord, Thou didst confirm Thy Godhead by bodily healing, that the people might believe in Thee and find salvation. Heal my heart, oh Lord, that I may believe in the divinity of Thy Church and find salvation for my soul.

"Holy Mother of God, thou who didst love and believe, pray for me and obtain for me the grace of God by thy perfect love and thy unfailing faith with which I unite my own. Then my reason can no longer strive against my believing. For I know now that God demands it and that I have His authority for it.

"Lord, grant me to believe, not because my reason has acknowledged the dogmas of faith, for they are in conflict with reason and they are irreconcilable with knowledge. But

"because Christ was of God,

"because the Church of Christ is of God,

"because Christ and the Church have the word of life,

"and because I will *live*."

In words such as these the unerring polar star was

found, the light-house which gave me my bearings. But new clouds again hid both star and light-house from me ; week after week, month after month, season after season were worn out in this slow, obstinate fight between two equally strong combatants. Again and again the thought returns that my religiosity is a sign of my inferiority, that I am becoming a Christian because I am worthy of nothing better. "I was unworthy of the pure religion of duty. I have become like the barbarian and the savage. Therefore I can only be raised up to life afresh by an external faith, an external authority, a visible Church which trains and teaches me. I had not grown to the stature of freedom, therefore God gave me back to dogma. Eternal Father, is this the truth—the terrible truth? Has my soul lost its purity and power—is that the reason it must have the restraining force of an external power over it? I think with horror of Carlyle's words about *all that forsake truth*" (March 26th). On other days it is the old Pantheism that draws me away from the path to the Church. "Out in the grey, quiet, rainy spring afternoon there is suddenly a sound like the calling of the cuckoo, and all at once my heart swells, deeply and painfully—I am seized with a longing to sink again into the Nirvana of my Pantheism, into that heathen abyss of Nature which enfolds and swallows one up in the great forests when the spring swells and is silent—Alone with God, one is that in one's heart—But alone with Nature, that is quite a different solitude. . . .

"I have issued from Nature—my life has hitherto been an unfolding of my nature, that which is of value in my work is Nature, my nature—and my best hours have been those in which I sank down into that devotion of contemplating Nature, from which I returned stronger, purer, happier. . . . But civilisation exists, duty, the conditions of life, family, the community, and one does not fulfil one's duties in civilisation by following one's nature.

"Oh eternally swelling, eternally withering Nature, is it our duty, have we, thy highest children, to deny thee so that we may redeem thee? Oh, Mother Eve, now as at the dawn of the ages, thou offerest us the apple of the serpent, but with the second Adam we turn away from the apple, and renounce thee—to redeem thee?" (March 28th.)

At long last I here made up my mind against Pantheism. More and more I felt that there was a reality *above* the natural one. "I continue to long for the hidden solitude far away in the forest, haunted by Pan. The voice from Veduskogin continues to pursue me, from the hidden groves where the sky is not seen. But I feel too, that God, the God of the Cross, has been merciful to me, has led me, has set me free, has made me sounder, happier, better. With Lacordaire I must acknowledge that I am led and driven on by *une grâce plus forte que moi*. By every road I am led back to faith. New points of view are continually opening out to me. Doctrine after doctrine becomes clear to me. Gate after gate is opened. Oh divine Love, cease not to work in me, but gain the victory over all petty arguments and all the efforts of the flesh at resistance!"

I was profoundly affected when the author, well-known under his pen-name of *Boganis* (the land-owner, W. Dinesen, of Rungsted) committed suicide. At one time his book, *A Huntsman's Letters*, had been for Stuckenberg and myself almost the ideal of poetry. We saw in this roamer of field and forest, this country gentleman, all that we so much desired to be ourselves, but to which we could not attain. And he, the fortunate and independent, unfettered and free of all relationships (so he seemed to us!)—he had now ended his life by his own hand! "Outside the faith," I wrote, "stands Ego and seizes one in its claws and drags one down to bottomless, burning despair." And further: "It is said in the Gospel: 'Be at peace with thine adversary while

thou art in the way with him.' This adversary is God, with whom we walk, and who is the enemy of our self and our flesh. We are in the way, let us make the way a means of making ourselves friends with God." During a talk with Carl Ewald[1] and other old friends and acquaintances I had a strong realisation of how far we had grown from each other. It was just at this time that another sensational suicide occurred and Ewald had then declared: "I am of the opinion that a time will come when human beings will decide for themselves when they will die." With his keen consistency he had already foreseen the doctrine about the permissibility of *Freitod* (no longer *Selbstmord*) proclaimed later by North German Liberalism and Socialism. But from that time I did not frequent the headquarters' café any longer.

Instead, I stayed at home and wrote the second half of *Le Livre de la Route* (*An Umbrian Chronicle*, completed on April 8th and at the same time read Huysman's recently issued novel of conversion, *En Route*. As I had at one time felt with *Des Esseintes*, so I now felt with Durtal. Like him, I too could say: "My mistake is that I keep on arguing," and complain of having "a soul that is blown about by every wind." (*En Route*, pp. 313, 311.) Durtal's liturgical enthusiasm induced me to go to the Catholic church again; in Bredgade I was present at the services of Holy Thursday, Good Friday, Easter Eve and Easter Day (11–14 April). But the ceremonies of Holy Thursday in the metropolitan church—especially the priests' genuflections before *Sanctum oleum* and *Sanctum chrisma*—seemed to me to be "fetish-worship." On Good Friday I was deeply impressed by the reading of the Passion—in particular by the profound, burning silence during the few seconds when all kneel after the last words of Christ on the Cross. On Easter Eve I note: "Bright, solemn, jubilant morning Mass—the litany of All Saints—*Magnificat*," and Easter Sunday: "Early

[1] See footnote, Vol. 1, p. 164.

Mass at six o'clock. *Gloria in excelsis. Victimae Paschali laudes.*"

Through books, however, I received stronger impressions. From Baroness Rosenörn-Lehn I continued to receive, amongst other literature, Georges Fonsegrion's periodical, *La Quinzaine*, and felt attracted to "clear French Catholicism." An article by Felix Klein against Renan and dilettantism gives me occasion for the following examination of conscience. "Abbé Klein shows how Renan, from the heights to which his Christian up-bringing had brought him, from a pure enthusiasm for progress and truth, sinks down to scepticism, epicureanism, dilettantism. This course of development is essentially that of most free-thinkers; one begins with noble resolutions, with the will to keep up ideals—one ends in a moral *laisser-aller*, in sheer craving for pleasure."

"It is this craving for enjoyment which is spiritually called dilettantism, and of this I have been and unfortunately still am a good Danish representative. For what do the various heroes of my books want but to enjoy themselves? What else are they but very pronounced *dilettanti*, who do no work except that of expressing their dilettantism in a literary form? That *is* work, of course, and it is therefore their only fulfilment of the will of God. It is their last loyalty to law-abidingness, the last point on which they have not emancipated themselves from God. It is here, therefore, that God seizes them, and the 'struggle for work' (see my *Tree of Life*) becomes for the *dilettante* the first striving to return to the world of duty" (April 16).

In Fonsegrion's periodical I also met for the first time a thinker whose philosophy was later to become for me (as it was for many) a chief corner-stone of faith: Maurice Blondel. I quote, in endorsing them, these words of his *L'Action*: "In order to yield all it can yield the human soul needs a divine atmosphere. Chris-

tianity alone, Catholicism alone, gives this vital atmosphere, and the strongest, fullest, most fruitful activity is therefore reached by the Christian who believes and conforms his life to his faith." "For" (I add after Fonsegrion), "a rich interior life is not necessarily dependent on a richly developed instinctive life. On the contrary, it develops more intensely the more one does to overcome oneself, just as by virtue of a wonderful order of things one becomes freer the more one submits oneself to obedience, and more personal, the more one gives up one's personality. Whosoever will lose his life shall find it."

It was at this time that Melchior de Vogüé made his famous pilgrimage to the Vatican and wrote a remarkable article about it. I wrote out the decisive passages of this article in my diary and here reproduce the conclusion. Melchior de Vogüé concludes his article with a comparison between the Church and the mariner's compass. "During the day and in calm weather man can find his way by other means, by his experience, his knowledge, his long habit of travelling. But when the night comes, and the storm, man must always have recourse to the mysterious needle which is guided by an unknown force ; he will ever be constrained to ask the way of the Keeper of the Compass, of the Helmsman, who knows and sees. And the Helmsman calmly awaits the return of forgetful humanity ; in prayer he walks on his everlasting watch in the active and silent solitude of the Vatican."

It still happened, but rarely, that I looked up old friends, those whose houses were not yet closed to me. In this way I arrived one evening at Carl Ewald's, in the midst of a large party. Amongst the guests was Clément, the artist, who talked about Florence and spoke with musical knowledge about Beethoven's ninth symphony. Another was Anna Larssen, the actress, whom I took in to supper, where spring flowers adorned the richly decked table of the ever hospitable Ewalds.

I felt, though, that I was no longer like the others, and without knowing how (perhaps because Madsen [1] was there), the thought of Alfred de Musset occurred to me; it seemed to me that I was the hero in his *Confessions d'un Enfant du Siècle*, and Carl Ewald was Desgenais. And when I reached home I took the long unread book down from the shelf (it stood beside Murger's *Vie de Bohême*, but I saw now how different the two books were!). I opened it and read, as if I had never read them before, the immortal passages with which the first part closes. To me, too, it had happened "to sit in despair at night on a bench and look hopelessly in all directions for help." I, too, understood that the heart of man has not said its last word when it has said "I believe only in what I see!" And whatever the life, with which I had tried to get into tune that evening, was for the others, it was no longer a life for me—*tout cela n'est pas la vie, c'est le bruit de la vie.* "The pride of those who have been struck by God," someone had during the course of the evening called my seclusion. Pride or humility, one thing I knew, one thing I understood, as de Musset had understood it and cried to his readers, "Beware of God! Thou art alone—face to face with Him!"

Yes, I was alone while the others went on with their banqueting. Alone with the adversary in the way.

VI

About this time the French Dominican, Père Lange, paid a visit to Copenhagen and preached a course of sermons at St. Ansgar's Church, a course of sermons that aroused a good deal of attention. Edvard Brandes was annoyed to see a Copenhagen public, otherwise spiritually emancipated, "out of snobbishness for everything French," running to a Catholic church. In the daily

[1] See Vol. 1, p. 98.

Press the clergy of the National Church wrote controversial articles against the emissary of the Pope. A debate was held in the Students' Society,[1] at which Georg Brandes explained in his best French to Père Lange that so far as he was concerned miracles belonged to the realm of superstition, together with were-wolves—*les loups-garous*. . . .

I did not hear the French priest, either at St. Ansgar's or at the Students' Society. But one day I stood outside the door of Bishop Johannes von Euch's library in Bredgade, where Père Lange received visitors. My old friend, Baroness Rosenörn-Lehn, had sent me a letter of introduction and asked me to call on the French father. It was the first time I entered the Bishop's house behind St. Ansgar's church; its quiet, semi-dark corridors, in which there was a faint smell of incense from the church adjoining, its high brown panels, the paintings and prints of sacred subjects on the walls, gave me an impression of a monastery. I visualised Beuron and Sagro Convento, Padre Felice. Of the interview with Père Lange I remember nothing, I have only a memory of the purity of his features, his white habit; the monastic atmosphere of the sombre library with a window overlooking a sunny garden in the fresh green of spring, where birds were singing as in the garden of a convent. . . .

Afterwards I went into St. Ansgar's and prayed. And felt, as I wrote in my diary, that it was the first step towards a real connection with the teaching Church.

In he beginning of May I received from the Ministry of Education a sum of 400 kroner[2] and made use of it for a summer holiday. At this time my eldest sister had a post as teacher in the school belonging to the Methodist congregation in Vejle, and my wife and I decided to go over and visit her. At first we had a room near the woods, afterwards we went to the Greis dale.

[1] See Footnote, Vol. 1, p. 81. [2] About £22.

The spring of that year came early and was beautiful. One day, shortly before we left Copenhagen, I wrote in my diary, sitting on a bench in the gardens near the citadel: "Lord, I marvel at the beauty of Thy world. The ruffled foliage of the golden-green sycamores shines in the morning sun, and the water of the city moat flows like heavy molten emerald. Birds are twittering and singing, bees are humming low down over the bright grass, big dandelions are gleaming like golden coins, the sparrows flash as they flutter from tree to tree. It is Sunday morning, all is sunshine and song of birds and spring. Yonder below the rampart two young men are fishing and chatting. And I am myself brimming over with light and peace and joy. I bend my head back against the back-rest of the seat. The birches above me rustle with a sound like silk. And the sky above is infinitely deep and blue. Infinite, infinite" (May 12).

We arrived at the rooms we had taken in the house of a mill-wright, close to the woods at the north of Vejle and on the border of the fjord, just when the apple-trees were in blossom. And while the petals fell into the tall grass about me and the flies buzzed, I sat reading, morning after May morning, looking up now and then from the book at my four-year-old son, who was walking about in the grass talking to himself, often coming along to me and telling me that "the trees had such a nice smell," or that he had picked a daisy "and all its children too, so that it should not miss them," or, "Daddy, can you remember yesterday, when we saw the little dead mouse, and there was a tiny little animal beside it, feeling round about it where it could make a hole to put the mouse in and lay its eggs in it. . . ."

After the May days came long, light May evenings and the first "white" nights. "Evening. Eel-fishing lights on the smooth, bright fjord. The sound of a concertina on the other side of the water, oars creaking in the rowlocks and voices against the opposite coast—

as in the years of my youth." And in our two little attic rooms, where the beds stood close under the sloping roof, we went early to bed without lighting candles, as we used to do in Svendborg long ago. . . .

Then we moved out to the Greis dale in June and stayed at the hotel there. After a fresh, cool May came a warm, early midsummer. "A morning of sunshine in the cool beech-woods, on the hilly slopes. Hot, sunny mid-day hours at the edge of the wood, with a view of sloping copses shining in the sun and of large meadows ablaze with white and yellow flowers, amongst them scattered flecks of red and blue ones. A stork sails away across the sky, a kite circles over the ridge of the woods. . . . Evening. Mist over the bog. The black outlines of the trees against the light air. A golden moon. The Greis stream, murmuring beneath our windows in the pearl-white night."

It was during this stay in the Greis dale that Catholicism began to grow Danish to me. When walking alone along the green paths in the woods, I would take out my rosary from La Rocca and say the prayers, here under the beeches as there under the olive trees. "In this wooded country, on long, happy rambles with my wife and son, the fulfilment of what I had asked for is beginning: that Nature should approve of my Christianity. I feel it being transformed into *God's Nature*, into the house of *the Father's omnipotence*, in which Christians are the children of the house" (June 8). "On a richly flowered bank, with tall grass and many bilberries and small rowan bushes. I am lying on thick cushions of moss and looking out over flowering fields of yellow, fragrant goose-grass. There is a mood of late summer in the windy day; the wind whistles away over me, waves the grass and sighs in the wood rising on either side. We gather delicate little hard ferns, we eat spicy bilberries, and far away under heavy clouds we see houses and woods in distant gleams of sunshine. It is

the healthy, happy open-air life of my early, lonely years regained, Nature restored to me; the land of poetry, which had been closed by sin, opened again by grace" (June 24).

Not always, though, did I feel thus. Sometimes the thought flashed in upon me that I was not writing verses any more, that as a poet I was dead, *poëta mortuus*. "For him who has given his heart to God, lyrics are no longer possible" (says the diary), "for he has no longer a heart of his own, singing within him, or ought not to have one. Consequently Christianity is synonymous for me with the death of lyrics. God demands my dearest, my only possession, that is, my song. He says, now as always: 'Leave all things and follow Me.' Lord, Lord—whither? And for what?"

For the present to continued theological study. Through my sister I had become acquainted with the Methodist minister in Vejle, Anton Bast, who was later to earn the gratitude of the homeless and poor in Copenhagen. I heard him preach at a meeting held in a field in the Greis dale, on a green mound, in the open air. The audience was seated on the grass, the Word of God preached with evangelical clearness in pure Danish, not with a German accent, as when the Catholic priests in Copenhagen spoke it; it was altogether "as simple and beautiful as the Sermon on the Mount." Afterwards the congregation had a meal in which I took part, the picnic baskets were unpacked and people sat on the grass or at the long tables which had been provided for them. Fru Bast, refined and charming, presided at our table—Bast went from group to group, chatting with the "brothers" and "sisters," now and then he came up to his wife to ask for "a little butter for the Larsens," or, "a couple of hard-boiled eggs for the Jensens," who had not brought enough provisions with them.

Afterwards Bast and I had a theological discussion, the first of many. The zealous young Methodist minister

was absolutely opposed to all High Churches and in particular to the Roman Catholic Church. When I quoted St. Matthew xvi, 18, to him, about Peter's power of the Keys, and Peter as the rock foundation of the Church, he answered that Peter's faith, or Peter himself, was the foundation of the Christian community, and that he, Anton Bast, a fisherman and the son of a fisherman in Lökken in Jutland, had received from the Lord the very same power to open and close heaven that had once been given to the Galilean fishermen. "When I preach the Word I open the gate of heaven, when I keep silence I keep the door of heaven closed. That is *my* power to bind and loose!"

Here I had come into close contact with the extreme Left of Christianity. Besides Anton Bast I also became acquainted with his friend, Udsen, older than he, and a teacher at the Methodist seminary in Copenhagen. This remarkable man was perhaps the perfect realisation of that ideal figure known in theological language as "an evangelical Christian." Sören Kierkegaard[1] had awakened him to religious life and after long research and trial he had found in Methodism the external form of religion in which it suited him best to live. His entire being was radiant with earnest conviction, lovable goodness and an ardent relationship with the Crucified. For him Christianity was something so personal that in his opinion it could not be communicated through teaching and he therefore carefully avoided all religious

[1] Kierkegaard. Sören Aabye (1813-1855). Danish philosopher, brought up in a strict Christian home. His mental powers matured early and he made profound studies in theology, philosophy and æsthetics. Was influenced by Hegel and Kant and also studied the Greeks, especially Plato and Aristotle. His best known work is *Either—Or*, a discussion of the ethical and æsthetic ideas of life, in which he emphasises the demand of Christianity for personal, individual sincerity. He maintained that Christianity is not a scientific objective theory of theology but a subjective truth acting upon life and existence. As a dialectician he has been said to be but little inferior to Plato and the productivity unfolded by him during twelve years is almost as unique as his originality and depth.

influence over his children. He was, besides, a Christian eclectic, after the manner of the inter-sectarian pietists of the eighteenth century, and his enthusiasm for Saint Bernard or Francis of Assisi was just as great as his reverence for Huss or Savonarola. I heard him give a lec ure in Vejle about the great preacher of the Crusades, the monastic father of Clairvaux. Afterwards he, Bast and myself had a long religious discussion, which was continued after Udsen's departure by the two of us who remained during the whole of my stay at Vejle.

To put it briefly, the doubts of the previous summer at La Rocca had come back. Again I saw the stains of blood on the white robe of the Church, the Inquisition, the burning of heretics, the night of Saint Bartholomew. "The true Church of Christ cannot have stained her hands with blood. The true Vice-Gerent of Christ cannot have burnt holy men like John Huss or Savonarola," said Bast. Then, in the heat of discussion his main idea broke out, that the true, invisible Church, which is God's elect community of saints, has always been persecuted by the visible, external one, which is the continuation of Judaism on Christian territory, the synagogue of Satan, the great harlot on the seven hills, drunk with the blood of saints. . . .

To one who has once been a Protestant Christian this argument is very strong. It speaks to reason as well as to feeling. In itself the name and dignity of the successor of the Good Shepherd and His Vice-Gerent upon earth seem irreconcilable with the application of punishment and torture for heresy and unbelief. It is hard to stand before the bronze tablet in the Piazza Signoria in Florence and say to oneself that he who allowed the Prior of San Marco to be burnt, and whose name was Alexander VI (that very Alexander VI and no other), that he was really in deadly earnest *il nostro dolce Christo in terra*, "our sweet Christ on earth," as Saint Catherine says. . . . After twenty, after five-and-twenty years, the old doubt

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can still awaken (as Newman confesses that it awoke in him, even beneath the cardinal's purple), and one asks oneself if they were not right who in one's youth said to one that he who sits in Rome "has made himself God," and allows himself to be called by names which belong to One and One only—"Holiness, Holy Father" —that he who sits on a throne in the city on the seven hills is not Christ, but Antichrist. "By their fruits ye shall know them." And these are their fruits: to burn the spirit, to extinguish light, to put out the eyes of reason—but if that is so I have entered into the service of darkness, then I am a sinner against the truth, then I have betrayed the cause of humanity and sold my birthright to Christian freedom for the singing of Mass and the perfume of incense. I shall have bowed the knee to Baal.

This was the conflict I had once more to struggle through during that summer, far away from all Catholic environment. Once only was I in a Catholic church, when I went to Horsens on the feast of Corpus Christi and heard Mass. In 1895 there was not as yet any Catholic mission in Vejle, and I found but a dreary substitute there at the service in the Irvingite chapel into which I strayed by chance one Sunday morning, and which I took for Catholic because of certain external resemblances. On the way to Horsens I made a note in my diary: "'*Come to Jesus!*' are the words of both Methodism and Catholicism. But the evangelical missionary preaches salvation through faith, the Catholic priest bestows it through the sacraments. Not by conversion alone are we saved, but by conversion to the Church, which is the communion of the faithful with Jesus and which lives with Him from His birth to His death. The Catholic acquires Jesus by way of the sacraments, the Methodist by way of sentiment. And now, suppose the sacrament of the Church is seen to have greater moral power than personal feeling?" "What doth it

profit a man if he gain the whole world and suffer the loss of his own soul? Is not the relation between Church and progress expressed in this? We civilised Protestants have gained a world by our apostasy from Rome. But if we have gained it at the cost of injury to our souls?" "I cannot believe in the *direct* forgiveness of sins, merely by an interior conviction, without oral confession and oral forgiveness. It must be obtained as when a child asks forgiveness of his parents—tells them everything. "Why am I in dread of being an enemy of progress that word with which an evil spirit is at present trying to frighten me? What is the good of this culture? For instance, does it make people better or happier to live in Paris?"

I had come prepared for great solemnities at Horsens, with the *Lauda Sion* sung by the choir in Gregorian chant and other liturgical glories for religious gourmands of the Huysmans-Durtal type. Father Kerff, whom I saw for the first time on that occasion and then only at the altar, simply said a low Mass and the congregation sang. But this suited me exactly—"a quiet, little earnest chapel," says the diary (June 14th). "The radiant faces of the Sisters of Saint Joseph, like blessed altar candles. And Danish singing during Mass. Since then Horsens has obtained a beautiful new church, the most beautiful, perhaps, of all the numerous modern Catholic churches in Denmark. Everywhere in provincial towns the small, temporary chapels, with which the Catholic Mission necessarily had to begin, are disappearing. I do not wish to say anything against the new churches, it is only right and a cause for joy that there is a use for them, and Jesus is present there, too, in His sacraments. But there was a peculiar atmosphere of evangelical simplicity, of early Christian humbleness, of Franciscan poverty, in these small chapels of the early days: a reconstructed out-house, a shed of coarse, roughly painted boards, a cleaned and white-washed stable. On winter mornings, when a

cheap little bell humbly called the faithful to the first Mass, and the Sisters of Saint Joseph, the Sisters of Saint Vincent de Paul or the Daughters of Holy Wisdom knelt in the front benches and read their office from the small books covered in black cloth by the light of a paraffin hanging-lamp, and Father Brems or Father Kerckhoffs came in from the sacristy and looked far too big in front of the small altar—oh, Premonstratensian chapel at Vejle, oh, Saint Laurence at Roskilde—such mornings made one feel as if one were in Bethlehem.

What was the end of the struggle between Methodism and myself? It did not end in Vejle, it was continued in Svendborg, where I spent a remaining summer month with my wife and child. Here, too, I met Protestant Christianity in my mother and sisters. On my mother's work-table by the window, overlooking the lane of my childhood's days, lay *The Church Bell*, the Sunday paper of the Home Mission.[1] I often read it and found in it passages like these: "You have prayed and fought, but in vain. Give it up, then. Say to Our Lord that you are lost and cannot save yourself. But just because you have reached the point of despair, throw yourself into His arms and He can save you." This was exactly the same as the Gospel of Methodism: "Take the place of the condemned sinner at the foot of the Saviour's Cross. Believe that you are saved, just because you are a sinner, and that Jesus died for sinners." Words like these haunted me on lonely walks, it was so simple, so clear, this evangelical message of grace! And one could accept it without at the same time having to take over the responsibility of defending, maintaining or keeping silent to what conscience might condemn—the crimes of intolerance—I felt beforehand the relief it must be to be able to throw off the heavy pack of history of Catholicism, and the apologetics, often, alas! so laboured, of nineteen centuries. But it was beyond my strength, I did not

[1] See footnote, Vol. 1, p. 22.

succeed in it. "It is all of no use, it does not help me at all. Without the Catholic Church, its prayers, its forms of piety, I shall speedily relapse into sheer egoism. I shall become discontented with my lot, greedy for this world. I am regretful over my cramped circumstances, I repent of having rejected my old friends. I am becoming unloving, hard; quarrelling and strife are breaking out" (August 1).

I wrote down words like these, sitting on a wood-pile in the densest part of the pinewood. It was late summer, there was no song of birds, only a dead oppressive stillness. With my head bowed down to the ground and my glance fixed on the thick carpet of russet pine-needles in front of me I prayed that I might not go astray.

VII

In August 1895 Mogens Ballin came back from Italy. After I had gone away he had stayed behind alone at La Rocca, and during the severe Umbrian winter he had contracted a cold which had developed into acute pneumonia. Shortly before Christmas his father received a telegram from Padre Felice, to inform him that his son had received the Last Sacraments. Accompanied by a friend of Mogens, Henrik Ballin set out with utmost speed on the long journey—would he find his son alive? Mogens recovered, but he had a long convalescence. However, after spending the spring in Rome and the early part of the summer on the shores of Lake Geneva, Mogens was at home again, as radiantly happy, as bright and young as ever.

I went to see him one of the first evenings after my return to Copenhagen from Svendborg. Mogens spoke of his illness, of how near he had been to death, and of the wonderful effect of the Sacrament of Extreme Unction. "All the supernatural world," he said, "all that which is otherwise more or less remote from us, as

something which we have to keep hold of, often with a great exertion and a conscious effort of will, all that suddenly became just as real and natural to me as the things about me, and Padre Felice, who stood bending over me. Indeed, it became more real, it became the *real* reality, burning through the other like fire through a thin wall of wooden boards." He had been ill in Assisi, in Filomena's house, having been taken thither from La Rocca, an impossible place for nurses and doctors. Eugenio and Rosina had come with him and had watched in turn by his bedside when no night nurse was to be had.

It was late that night before I left Mogens—those who have known him are aware that a talk with him might very well begin at five o'clock in the afternoon and not finish till two next morning. "It wasthe night of St. Laurence—a year ago I had sat in the cloister at La Rocca and written verses. It was a deathly still moonlight night with large, golden shooting stars. A night of motionless and heavenly stillness, a night on which one is seized with a longing to die—of expectation of the wonders that never happen" (The diary, August 10).

Five days later, on the feast of the Assumption, I went with Mogens to St. Ansgar's Church, and after coming home from Mass I wrote the following :

"Jesus suffered in His life.

"Jesus suffered in His death.

"Jesus still suffers at the right hand of the Father.

"Jesus offered up His life.

"Jesus offered up His death.

"Jesus is still the perpetual sacrifice to the Father.

"Jesus saved us by His life.

"Jesus saved us by His death.

"Jesus saves us by His perpetual life of sacrifice—the unity of death and life.

"We offer up ourselves in faith in Jesus, the living Son of God.

"We offer up ourselves in faith in Jesus, the dead Son of God.

"We offer up ourselves with Jesus, in Jesus.

"Therefore the life of the Christian is a perpetual sacrificial life with the perpetually self-sacrificing Jesus,

"a life which is the death of self, and the life of Jesus in the soul, a unity of death and life.

"By faith in Jesus we receive grace for the sacrifice of our self.

"By faith in the sacrifice of Jesus we receive grace for the death of our sin.

"By faith in the perpetual sacrifice of Jesus we receive, spiritually and sacramentally, through Mass and Holy Communion, the grace of Jesus for the blotting out of sin, for the sacrifice of self, for the life of charity.

"Summed up: The grace of God is an effect of the sacrifice of Jesus. And grace is the power to sacrifice self with Jesus. Amen." (Aug. 15.)

Ballin stayed a couple of months longer in Copenhagen. Together we went to church on Our Lady's feast in September and made a pilgrimage on Michaelmas Day (Sept. 29th) to St. Andrew's Church at Ordrup. We went out on foot from Copenhagen and arrived when High Mass had already begun; just as we had found seats in the closely-thronged church, the choir sang from the small organ-loft above the entrance door the mighty adjuration of the Prince of Angels in the Gradual: "Holy Michael archangel, defend us in battle, that we may not perish in the tremendous judgment." That note —*ut non pereamus in tremendo judicio*—was to be the keynote of my life throughout many years—the note of the day of death, the note of the day of judgment, *Dies irae*, the note of the Last Day . . . .

Le Livre de la Route came out at this time, and in spite of its attacks upon Radicalism, was not badly received in *Politiken*, where Edvard Brandes found that it reminded him of Huysmans' *En route*. Other critics were

less kind, they found fault in particular with *An Umbrian Chronicle*, which they considered to be "immodest." ("One is quite at liberty, however, to disclose one's profligacies," I note in reply in the diary.) One reviewer called my sincerity in question—"an honest man" (he argued strangely), "would not have so many scruples."

Amongst Catholics the book aroused interest. But, as Mogens said to me, "if it were not for the concluding words one would get the impression that the author had intended to describe a temptation, now overcome, to become a Catholic." Personally, he had a higher opinion of *German Days*, which was dedicated to him, especially of the chapter on Henry Suso, and when I showed him one day the translation I had made of some of the prayers of the old Dominican mystic, he took the manuscript away with him and had it printed in *Nordisk Ugeblad for katolske Kristne*.[1]

Meanwhile, my position, from a pecuniary point of view, continued extremely hopeless. As might have been expected, *Le Livre de la Route* did not sell (ten years elapsed before a new edition was printed), so that if I—as it was said in some quarters—had "speculated in Catholicism"—I had speculated very badly. Another rumour would have it that I and my family were "living in luxury on Catholic money." The truth was that we were living in poverty on advances made by that never failing friend, Ernst Bojesen. I thought again of going to the provinces to get work as a journalist—there was a prospect of a post in Silkeborg—another man, however, obtained it and I remained in Copenhagen. "A miracle is needed to make a way open for me," says the diary of October 3rd.

The miracle delayed coming for a while yet. If the words were meant for anyone, they were meant for me: "Seek *first* the kingdom of God." And I did so. I made the great resolve and knocked at the door of the Catholic

[1] Northern Weekly Paper for Catholic Christians.

Church to ask for instruction in the faith and having obtained it, to be received. At last, at last, I had had enough of making up a religion on my own account!

Through Baroness Rosenörn-Lehn I was directed to Father A. Brinkmann of the Jesuit house in Stenosgade. "He is from the Rhineland; a soul of fire and a heart of gold," my old friend wrote about him.

There was still a final hesitation to overcome at the last moment—"my constant shrinking, my returning to my nature as to a mother country; that is what hinders me," is my record in the diary. In order to bind myself I decided to write a letter to the father, whom I did not know, and in it to pledge myself to call upon him. Even this I postponed, however, until at last one evening (it was on October 10th), "I felt myself gently but irresistibly drawn to write this letter. I tried everything else—reading, writing—in vain! *I was absolutely reduced to this one thing—to write the letter*. It was written, easily and naturally. Afterwards I felt a profound peace, a perception that the time I had spent on it was supernatural, raised up above all other times in my life."

Some days were still to pass before I received an answer and an appointment for the first lesson with Father Brinkmann was fixed. Before this Mogens Ballin left Copenhagen to go south again, this time to the Benedictine abbey, Emmaus, in Prague, where Verkade was working as a fresco-painter, and where Mogens wished to try whether he also had a vocation to the religious life. On the morning of October 17th I bade him good-bye and turned away from the railway station, out to grey, muddy Copenhagen, with a feeling that everything was still greyer and muddier than before, and so thoroughly empty.

We had left the little flat in town and had moved out to Frederiksberg where we had found a flat in an old house, in a garden behind the houses facing the street. The house had at one time been part of a tea-pavilion

belonging to some pleasure gardens ; it was now divided into two flats, of which we had the inferior one, consisting of two fairly spacious rooms, a triangular kitchen and an equally triangular study. The place was damp and in the summer it was dark because of the trees outside, but there was a small garden in front, and behind the house a large open space, a good playground for a four-year-old boy.

It was not far from this house to the Catholic chapel in Stenosgade (the building of the church had begun, it was not completed till the year after). One morning, then, after hearing Mass in the little chapel, I rang the bell of the adjoining presbytery and asked the rough-bearded, foreign-looking lay brother who opened the door, whether I could speak with Father Brinkmann. It was the morning of October 22nd.

On the previous evening I had prepared a list of all the Catholic literature through which I had worked my way during the last eighteen months. There was *L'Homme*, by Ernest Hello, there were Thomas à Kempis, Suso and Tauler ; there were *The Little Flowers of Saint Francis* and other Franciscan books ; there was Pascal's *Pensées*, and there were Fathers of the Church, such as Athanasius, Cyril, Justin, read in the translations by Höffding-Muus. There was Joseph de Maistre : *Les Soirées de Saint Pétersbourg ;* there were *Les Sources* and *La Connaissance de l'Ame* by Gratry ; Monseigneur Bougaud's biography of Marguerite Marie Alacoque ; there were Pörtzgen : *Herz des Gottmenschen* and Kirschkamp : *Geist des Katholicismus*. . . .

There were more, a great many more ; as I sat waiting in the parlour at the oval table with the jute table-cover I ran through all the titles. Then the door opened, and there he stood before me, small, thin and erect, in the long, black cassock, with the grey silk scarf tied loosely about his throat, smiling, with blue, short-sighted eyes behind the steel-mounted spectacles, delicate of feature,

slightly ruddy in complexion, with a light, glittering hoar-frost of silvery beard of a day's growth about cheek and chin. There he stood, Father August Brinkmann of the Society of Jesus, and I handed him the card from Baroness Rosenörn-Lehn—her card, my card and my list. Standing up, he ran quickly through it as he looked over his spectacles, which he then adjusted, and, looking kindly at me he said : "There is one book which I have looked for in vain in your list. It is the Catholic Catechism. This I will now give you and then we will begin studying it together."

THE UNLEAVENED BREAD

The unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.—I Cor. v, 8.
. . . . et pura puris mentibus sinceritas azyma.
From the Vespers Hymn on Low Sunday.

I

I came away from the parlour in Stenosgade and my first meeting with Father Brinkmann in an uplifted, almost joyous mood. A deep, quiet cheerfulness rejoiced within me; I had the feeling of being safe at last, of at last being in good hands. When I met Gustav Wied[1] in the main street close by and he jestingly asked whether he might offer me anything, I answered in my brimming gaiety, "Why, yes, a bath!" And we went into the municipal baths together, where he paid for a hot bath for me.

On October 25th, the anniversary of my arrival in Firenze, I had my first instruction from Father Brinkmann. Besides the Catechism he handed me the first volume of Gutberlet's *Apologie des Christentums*, which I read at home, and from which I made excerpts. After the four volumes of Gutberlet I read Weiss's five volumes, then Hettinger's *Apologetik*, also in several volumes, finally Willmer's great *Lehrbuch der christlichen Religion*.

I have here before me seven grey exercise books, with the title, *Excerpta et cogitata*" ("read and considered"), and dated November, 1895, December, 1895, January, 1896, February, 1896. They contain the results of my work during the four months in which I received

[1] A writer of satirical novels and plays.

instruction in the Catholic Catechism at No. 4 Stenosgade. And in these exercise books I see how, step by step, day by day, I abandon fruitless pondering to receive the teaching of the Church—*philosophia perennis*.

The morning after my first visit to Father Brinkmann I am still a theosophist on my own account and, as usual, I construct a system for myself:

"That void, from which God created the world, was self-will.

"By natural development the will of the individual is made subject to the will of the family. The erotic is the first breach of self-will; the egoist therefore fears it, or seeks to turn it into sensual-sentimental enjoyment.

"To follow self-will is to do evil and remain in the void of Nature, is therefore a will to death (which believes itself a will to life).

"The virtue of the animal and of natural man is to sacrifice his own will for the will of the race—mother love, family affection, love of country.

"But the virtue of the Christian, at its highest point, is to renounce *all* self-will, the will of the individual as well as that of the race, in order to be wholly united to the will of God through obedience, poverty and chastity.

"The fall of sin was a fall from the will of God to self-will, from theonomy to autonomy.

"The Redemption is the sacrifice of self-will to the will of God."

This private theosophy is now built up on the theology of the Church and all the philosophy on which the Church has set her seal—Aristotelean-Thomistic philosophy. There are three fundamental points in this philosophy: God exists—Jesus is God—the Catholic Church is founded by Jesus. Corresponding with this, Catholic apologetics have three main sections: the defence of God, the defence of Christ, the defence of Rome. From Celsus to Voltaire and from Julian the

Apostate to Loisy the same fight has been fought about the same three strongholds.

To my surprise I found that Willmers, Weiss and particularly Gutberlet (professor of philosophy at Fulda) were exceedingly well acquainted with modern thought, and discussed its theories and hypotheses with much calmness of mind. "Even if we presume," (it is said by Gutberlet), "that man has created religion out of a need and craving for help, he has not himself created the nature from which such a necessity arises." "In other words," I continued, "when man, everywhere of natural necessity, becomes religious, it is because otherwise he cannot live. Moreover, this world is so ordered that only believing human beings can live in it, therefore it is necessary and right to believe."

The treatment accorded to Pantheism as a philosophic and religious system interested me profoundly. "Pantheists are of the opinion that the feeling of amazement or reverence for infinity (my *μέγα θαῦμα*!) is religion. But true religion, in its proper sense, is only to be found in the relation of man to a super-mundane, personal being, on whom man is dependent, and who guides his destiny here and in the beyond." Of a pantheistic original being, a pantheistic God, Goethe's great *ἓν καὶ Πᾶν*, Gutberlet asserted that it could not be an *infinite being*. "It cannot be, because it has to contain within itself the sufficient, necessary reason for a definite, finite number of existing things. This entails its finiteness, for a being which of natural necessity produces its effects (and that is the case of the pantheistic divinity) cannot be more perfect than it is seen to be through its productions."

As I had grown up with the thought (in itself unthinkable) of the infinity in the number of existing beings, this argument made no impression upon me. The pantheistic divinity which I could very well imagine was simply bottomless, and from this bottomless well

ascended an unceasing flow of beings—I did not stop to ask *whence*.

There was another argument, however, which I *was* able to understand. As a boy, almost as a child, I had already had a strong and oppressive sense of the *contingency of existence*—that exactly *this* world exists—and only this—and that there is no other. This childhood's feeling became a point of connection with the proof given by scholastic philosophy of the existence of an intelligent world-cause. "That the real things exist, while the other, possible things do not exist, can only be explained by a selection made by a free world-cause. Freedom and selection, however, are impossible without insight, therefore the existing cause of the things in the world must be intelligent. This cause is also creative because it has made the decision between being and not-being; its will resulted in some things becoming real, others remaining possible. The intelligent, creative world-cause is *God* in the full sense of this word—a personal God distinct from the world, causing the world."

This was clear—it made an impression. The scholastic philosophy now showed further how the same contingency becomes effective in the *evolution* of the world. Things act in this way and that, not in another of a hundred possible ways. Here again, then, we must assume that "a free being has chosen this particular course of things. Amongst all the *possible* causes a definite number with definite qualities would have to be selected and placed in definite mutual relationships, so as to produce this particular world-course."

"Wrong reasoning," the Pantheist and Naturalist exclaim here. "Evolution is simply eternal, has never begun. It is necessary, it has always existed." The Catholic philosopher takes up the challenge. "If evolution is necessary," he says, "then it must certainly go back as far as its necessary causes, that is, into eternity.

But an eternal evolution would of necessity long since have brought about a state of infinite perfection. As we evidently have not reached such a state, the world-process must have had its beginning in time. And as innumerable moments of beginning have been possible in time, one of these moments must have been decided by a free choice." This again was obvious, as was also that the greater or lesser perfection of the beginning stages would have to be decided. When, as a matter of fact, existence began as a chaos—and on this point Moses and Darwin were agreed—and not, for instance, as a cosmos, it must have depended on choice, not on necessity. The "world-causes" were potentially the "world." At a given moment they must have chosen to become the world. Therefore the world must either choose to begin as chaos—or God chooses to create the world in an undeveloped state of beginning. One mystery is not greater than the other!

But one might go further—and scholasticism did go further. "Speaking quite accurately," it asserted, "no development at all is possible if one excludes a free choice at the beginning of the world-process. For if the world-cause does not of free will decide the course of the world, the latter necessarily follows from its essence. But that which necessarily follows from the essence of a thing has existed just as long as its cause, consequently can never have begun. Thus a world-process beginning in time, and depending on a free will, is impossible." Schopenhauer had perceived this—in my excerpts from the Frankfurt philosopher's writings I found the following: "As from the standpoint of the Pantheist an infinite period of time must have elapsed up to any given moment, everything that time was to bring must already have been present (*Welt als Wille und Vorstellung*, II, Cap. 17). From eternity the impersonal world-principle must have produced its entire contents and a progressive development in time would not be

possible. Meanwhile development was a reality, the world had therefore not existed from eternity. But if it were not eternal it had arisen in time, created by the free will of a God.

In this way I became acquainted with the proofs of God's existence, which the University of Copenhagen had turned into heresies, and they did not seem to me to be altogether slight. "Our thought," Gutberlet wrote, "grasps infinity, both extensively and intensively; it is equipped with ability for the infinite. But such ability cannot proceed from a finite world-origin. Our will is directed to the infinite, to such a degree that it cannot find rest or blessedness in any finite good but only in the infinite. Now, as an intelligent creator of the world cannot have directed the fundamental need of man—which is indisputably the need of happiness—to an imaginary aim, the infinite good must exist."

Times have come later in my life when I have found myself tempted to deny the truth of this train of thought, when it has seemed to me that the conclusion was not imperative, and that the lot of man might very well be everlasting, hopeless aspiration. When I was twenty-nine I did not think thus. "If only we *will* be happy," says the diary, "we must come to God. But the perverted will *will not be happy*, it seeks unhappiness, despondency, vice and ruin and rejoices in it. This is the real effect of the Fall, man has turned his love from good to evil, from life to death."

The Catholic philosopher also deduced the existence of God from other fundamental feelings of man. "The power which truth exercises upon us can only be explained" (wrote Gutbertlet), "by this, that it is founded upon a real being, a being who is just as eternal, unchangeable, omnipresent, immeasurable, omnipotent, infinite as the realm of truth itself. This being is God, the fundamentally true."

This was what I had felt at La Rocca, when on lonely

wanderings, entangled in doubts, I had tightly gripped hold of a rock and in its immoveableness perceived something like a message from immoveable truth itself, and felt that no faith could be true which the rocks and stones could not approve. In the feeling too, for the exalted, the feeling which is so difficult for modern psychologists to explain, scholasticism saw a spontaneous perception of God. "If this feeling arose in regard to a finite being, even though such a being might be great by virtue of its extent, it could not be so unspeakably exalting and beneficent in its effect—it would only be a feeling of impotence, a dull, depressed mood of listlessness. When it is not so it is because we have a perception of the presence of real infinity in the exalted, and our spirit recognises in this infinity its most actual and sympathetic object."

In the midst of the world's flood of phenomena, then, God stood as the only really existing being, the fundamental being, from whom all else had being; the deepest reality, the only reality, that which alone had the right to say: "I am." "Round about us," wrote the Catholic philosopher, "we see a world in incessant movement, and this movement cannot have arisen from existence itself, the things, the bodies, maintaining indifference to all forms of movement; while they, if their essence compelled them to movement, would not be able equally to assume all forms of movement or come to rest. If the movement followed from the essence of the things, the latter would have, either simultaneously to have all forms of movement—which is impossible—or to fix themselves in a single state of movement, which they do not do." The movement, therefore, does not arise from the world, but is communicated from outside, by the unmoved mover, the *κινοῦν ἀκίνητον* of Aristotle, that is, by God. As the Psalmist of old had already briefly said: "He created us. We did not create ourselves."

It is not my intention, however, to go through Catholic apologetics, such as can be read in the above-named text-books and many others. Doubts, of course, arose, but I submitted them to my fatherly friend and teacher, and he often solved them in one word. And he was in himself, better than all arguments, a proof of the Catholic faith. It was of these hours in the old Jesuit father's room in Stenosgade that I was thinking when I wrote in the novel *Our Lady of Denmark*[1] about Herman Ronge in regard to Father Gregory: "It was seldom that he needed to submit his doubts to his tutor, whom he gradually came to love with filial affection. Merely to walk into his austere cell, in which the furniture consisted of a table and a bed, two chairs and a prie-dieu, had a greater effect upon Herman Ronge than whole volumes of apologetics. The sight of this man of sixty, with the refined, ascetic features, sitting in the meagrely-furnished room, and taking the utmost pains in teaching patiently—nay, even with kindness and affection—the stranger who had come in from the street, made a deeper impression than many sermons. Father Gregory's whole person radiated an atmosphere of faith and love which was irresistible in its effect. One felt that for this man the supernatural was real, and one let oneself be drawn with him into that higher world. Father Gregory's soul was like a bright, warming fire, at which the wanderer, numb with doubt and sin, might rest and gain new strength, and find new courage. His glance was always turned heavenwards, and without knowing it he compelled his young friend to look in the same direction."

This does not mean that study and discussion were neglected. Besides the above-mentioned handbooks I read and made excerpts from the astronomer, Father Secchi's *Die Grösse der Schöpfung*, several writings about

[1] See Vol. 1, p. 256.

the cult of the Blessed Virgin, J. L. Holstein-Ledreborg's[1] biting polemic, *Evangelical-Lutheran*, Paul Majunke's book about Luther, Th. Specht's monograph: *Die Wirkungen des eucharistischen Opfers* . . . . But more and more it became clear to me that Verkade was right when he wrote to me in a Christmas letter: *Faites un don généreux de vous-même à Dieu!* Yes, I was no longer to bargain with God, no longer to think that the price of the kingdom of heaven was too high, and that the Pearl of great price was bought too dear.

Christmas comes—in the chapel in Stenosgade they have set up the Crib, as when I saw it two years earlier, one day when Mogens Ballin drew me into the chapel with him—I could still remember how devoutly he had knelt before it. Now I was alone at the Crib and was on my knees myself, and I prayed, "Oh Lord, send the light of Thy grace into my thoughts, and let me see more and more clearly that my self is not the great treasure I imagine, but a small coin which is quickly spent—that my self is not a large castle, but a mean little hut which only seemed large to me and splendid like a castle because I knew nothing better, because I had not seen Thy resplendent everlasting dwellings, oh most merciful Lord!" (New Year's Eve, 1895).

More and more strongly I feel that the hour of parting is drawing near. "Only he who will lose his life can preserve it. But it is then literally true, that saying about *denying* oneself. Then I must turn my whole being upside down, I must renounce and leave all that in which I have hitherto lived. And the strange thing is, that that in which I have hitherto lived has mainly made me unhappy. And yet I am grieved at the thought of leaving it. Because man above all else loves his self, his self-will: 'Man's will is man's heaven,' even in hell. Man

[1] Holstein-Ledreborg. Count Joseph (1839-1912). Landowner and politician. Was led to Catholicism through studying Kierkegaard (see footnote, p. 32) and received into the Church in 1867.

prefers to be unblessed and to be himself to becoming happy by giving up himself." "Man's will is *to be himself* —which is God's own prerogative, for God is One in Himself." "'Ye shall become like God,' whispered the serpent. And man will not let himself be recalled from any pride or sensual delight by any suffering or sorrow" (Jan. 5).

But *I* refused any longer to be counted among the worshippers of the serpent, those proud reprobates! On the morning of the feast of the Epiphany I write in my diary: "Follow the Star! Seek the Child! Then shall all these things be added unto you." Further down on the same page: "At home after High Mass, a great joy descended upon me. The day was rainy and dull and a crowd of sparrows twittered in a tree in the old garden behind the house. And I felt that *all this*— the happiness, the joy, like that of the twittering sparrows —that it was all to be given to me, and that it was the reward and the result of the *self-denial* of faith in the *humility* of the spirit and the *obedience* of the will.

Then late one evening, one night when the snow was whirling round my low house and I alone was awake, I began to prepare my confession, to put my life in order, to settle up with the past and make up the books. The diary says:

"Jan. 15. A night of snow-fall—all over the room letters from the last fourteen years. What a long, extraordinary life! What a crowd of all kinds of people— relations, friends, benefactors, publishers, editors, lawyers, creditors, sisters, sweethearts, men on the Exchange, writers, students, comrades, artists, zoologists, journalists, professors, socialists, monks—and so much takes on a quite different meaning now! It is as if my egoism had prevented me from seeing— I have deceived those who were good to me and I have believed the deceivers—Photographs, letters written by some now dead—everywhere lying, defection, and

playing with life—no relationship in which I have done right. Promising rashly, running into debt, never a thought of payment. A monomaniac egoist who shakes off all obligations—a bad, incapable person—useless, worthless.

"Only now do I see myself. At that time I always thought I was right. Now I see how I was in the wrong, how hideous, how mean. How petty and exacting I was. To think that I was *tolerated* at all!

"The storm is growling, the snow is drifting. Packet after packet of letters is taken out. I live again through forgotten events, through dangers long since passed, festivals of which the joy is gone—friends who now are enemies—embarrassments, business matters, love affairs, despairs—all of them far away, forgotten, dead, lost . . . .

"The first halting letters to editors—in a writing which I hardly recognise as my own—and the editor's answer to Mr. J. J. Letters from schoolmasters and assistant masters, administrators of bequests and from "The Social Democrat," *Testimonium paupertatis*, testimonials, certificates—letters from the "Small Loan Fund," violet and pink feminine envelopes, dried flowers, bunches of violets and snowdrops, scraps of manuscripts of poems, with many sketches in the margin—old newspapers, old Press notices, old joys and feuds—layer upon layer of the past.

"The most varied handwritings, conventional, dashing, honest, affected, vague, firm. Old addresses, post-marks and dates. All my old life—arrangements about work; prescriptions and bills, engagement cards of friends, and continually my own name, which seems to me like the name of one dead—over and over again on all the hundreds of envelopes—the estate of one *deceased*.

"Again and again have I been in the wrong. My life has been childish—and shameful. The egoism of a boy.

"And nothing at all of it is anything to me any more. It is done with, my God—and I thank Thee !"

II

"Very well, then," said Father Brinkmann, "we will fix the day for your first confession on February 15th and the day for your reception into the Holy Catholic Church on the 16th. Are you satisfied with that ?"

I was more than satisfied. I had just had an admirable hour of instruction with the old Jesuit who had, amongst other things, pointed out the analogy between knowledge of nature and the knowledge arrived at through faith. "The knowledge of nature," he said, "is an exact knowledge, even though its premisses are quite unknowable. We do not know what light is, what movement is, we use expressions like energy and matter, knowing well that they are only accepted conditions for unknowable quantities. Nevertheless, we arrive at practically correct results. In the same way in the world of grace—here, too, the ultimate principles are incomprehensible, unknowable. Theology rests on mysteries, on riddles, but is none the less quite real, corresponding to reality. In regard to dogma as in regard to the physical atom one must accept it in order to understand. Thus only can we become partakers of the truth. While rebellion against the unknowable leads into error, at first theoretically, philosophically ; then practically, morally, so that he, who in his pride would 'be like God,' ends in becoming *thierischer als jedes Thier*—as Goethe says."

This was exactly what I had found out myself by experience. It was convincingly clear to me how perfectly Catholicism and reality fitted into each other. This doctrine was true because like no other it accorded with the conditions of existence and with man's nature. Schopenhauer's philosophy had been like a tool with

which one could prize open a hidden door to the secret of the world. Catholicism was the master key itself fitting smoothly into the lock of the great door. "We have only to have confidence in God—give Him credit, believe Him at His word, trust in Him that He will not lead us astray. Then it will not fail to be seen in the end that we have not been mocked, but that everything is as we have believed," said Father Brinkmann. And he added, "We call the Last Day *Dies Domini*, the Day of the Lord, because on that day He will call His servants to account. But" (and the old Jesuit lowered his voice), "we have also to call Him to account—we shall get an explanation of all that seemed to our reason to be inexplicable riddles which we had to take on trust. We shall be permitted to look into His ledgers, and we shall see that all the figures tally."

My first confession and my reception were to take place—not in the little chapel in the presbytery, but in the church of the Sacred Heart, now completed and recently solemnly consecrated. Father Brinkmann did not wish to hear my first confession himself. "I do not usually hear the confessions of those I have instructed," he said. "You might confess to the Bishop, for instance, or here in this house to one of the fathers." I chose the latter, and it was decided that I was to make my first confession to Father Joseph Schmidt, a priest unknown to me.

I prepared, then, for this first confession during the days preceding February 15th. Following Father Brinkmann's advice, I wrote it down in order not to forget anything. That night of snow, when I had set my past in order, had been a good preparation—one forgets one's life so easily, especially those things in it on which one does not like to dwell. One by one I went through the old Ten Commandments and examined the years that had passed in the stern light from Sinai. Point by point I had to admit with the Psalmist :

"If Thou, O Lord, wilt observe iniquities : Lord, who shall bear it ?"

During that time I had a long talk—it lasted until three o'clock in the morning—with one of the old acquaintances of the days of "The Tower." He came out of interest, out of sympathy, out of curiosity—came also, perhaps, because like me he had come into contact with the new, Catholicising and Catholic France, had read Villiers and Verlaine, Hello and Huysmans. . . . "But, after all, have you been such a great sinner ?" he said with a smile, over the third or fourth whisky. "Have you been any worse than the rest of us ? And have we been so bad, after all ? We have not always been faithful to our wives, we have run into debt, we have caroused rather freely at times, but are we any less decent than other fellows ?"

Perhaps not. Perhaps we were decent men—as men go, and as most decent men are. But how was it, oh decent man, that time in your wild youth, long before you became a bank director or a co-partner in the firm of wholesale linen goods ? Deep down in the past, far down amongst the dead years, is not something stirring there—like a pale worm ? Do you remember that little girl—she was only fifteen or sixteen, wasn't she—in the house where you had a room ? She kept your room in order because the family was poor, and you played with her, made her believe that you were fond of her, got her into your room in the dusk when her parents were out and sat there crumpling her and breaking her modesty. Where is she now ? What did she become, after you ? . . . . Or do you remember your first clerkship, you had just proudly become a member of the Commercial Society and had your dinner at the Society's rooms. Your salary was insufficient and you pilfered from the petty cash box which was in your care, and when the shortage was discovered, you turned suspicion away from yourself by lies, so that the blame fell on the office

porter. Was he dismissed? Or what happened? Or do you recall that time when you must needs have a new suit to go out with Elna? It was no use going to a fashionable tailor, shabby as you were in your old winter coat. Then a fellow-clerk gave you the address of a little cheap tailor living on the top floor of a house in a third-rate street. Do you remember his flat—the room which was a workshop at one end, a bedroom at the other? Do you remember how over-heated it was, and how it smelt of the pressing-iron?—and his worn-looking wife and the grey faces of the little children playing on the floor? Do you remember that he wanted you to pay something on deposit—"it is far too great an expense for me to buy that fine, blue serge," he said, looking so anxiously at you. "I am only a small tailor," he added, with a pleading look, hoping you might be an honest fellow and not a swindler, like so many young fellows nowadays—And you got your fine blue serge suit; it came late on the eve of Whitsunday, and you had taken care not to be at home. The next day you were out in the woods with Elna and your fine new clothes were admired, and you had lunch in the Deer Park, but was the suit ever paid for?

Ah, all of us who became honest men later—is our past any different? Was not our youth like that? And later, much later, that evening after a men's dinner at a fashionable restaurant—oh well, dash it all, it was too bad of Petersen to be so lavish with the champagne—of course that kind of thing *ought not* to happen when one is a married man—but after all one is only human. . . .

Ah, all of us, who pass for decent men—who amongst us dares to cast the first stone?

But when at last everything had been ransacked, found, classified and written down, I went for a walk. It was early spring, the first eranthis were peeping up in the villa gardens, there was warm sun over withered grass, a racing wind was snapping the dead branches from the

trees in the parks. I went out to Söndermarken, followed the path on the right alongside the Roskilde road, until I came to the bench opposite the gardener's house where we had lived two years before. There I sat down, for this bench was a particular bench in my life, a bench of benches—I had found it on my nineteenth birthday, when as a newly-hatched student I strolled about in the Copenhagen parks, with Goethe's poems in my pocket. A foggy grey, foggy mild November day I had sat here—the very day for me, with a spicy smell of fallen leaves from the thick carpet of wet, golden-brown foliage under the trees, with clear strings of pearly drops on all the bushes, with heavy mist dripping from the tall, black trees. Not a sound, save now and then the cry of a rook, or the crowing of a cock behind the hedge, the rumbling of cart wheels out in the broad, misty country. Otherwise silence and peace, the great, healing peace of November—soothing Nirvana. To this bench I had returned again and again, on bright summer mornings, in the dusk of grey autumn afternoons, and that hopeless morning in May, 1889, when I felt as one who is at home nowhere, belonging neither to the day nor the night. On this bench I was now sitting again, seven years after, and looking across at the yellow two-storied house in which we had had the flat on the first floor. It was occupied again, there were curtains at the windows and plants in pots on the window-sills. I saw the balcony where my son had played and on which I had so often stood and looked at the stars and heard the hooting of the owls. Behind the house was the wide country—the country which I had roamed with Gottschalk and with Viggo and Ingeborg Stuckenberg—the home-country of my restless, unhappy, roaming youth. There it lay—out there were still the lake and the inn and the arms of the windmill against the horizon, and one could still walk out to "The Three Flagons" and eat fried eggs with good, fresh, country bread and drink bitters. One night

I had dreamed of this country and had written verses about it.

> The land that in the night I saw in dreams
> was flat and green and full of rushing streams ;
> I wandered on, the breeze was moist and keen,
> the clouds of storms and harvest bore the mien,
> and about my feet the grass did whip me as I walked.
> I wandered on until my eye perceived
> a narrow streak of silver-grey upon the sea
> which lay along the border-line of earth and sky.
> There did I halt and hear the screaming of the gulls
> and poplars whispering from a grass-grown dyke.
> Then did I see whence I this land did know
> and that here my life for me was waiting,
> prepared for me who wandered lost,
> and prayed, in exile, to an image strange to me.

Yes, this was "my own life," that I looked out across once again—"my own life in good and evil—and nothing but this," as Stuckenberg was soon after to call out to me. But "my own life" was not enough for me. It had been weighed in the scales of existence and found wanting. Others, perhaps, might find it enough to live their own lives. I did not deny it. But my path went inexorably to the kneeling-bench before that which the poem had called "a strange image"—to Our Lady's carved, many-coloured and gilded altar in the church of the Sacred Heart. My path led to the confessional.

I rose from the bench and looked neither to the right nor the left until I stood in Stenosgade. It was about midday, the church was sunny and warm. I knelt down, I could not pray, I only waited. A door was opened in the chancel, a priest came, genuflected to the altar, strode with slow and dignified steps down through the church and disappeared into one of the two confessionals in the south transept. I understood that it was Father

Joseph Schmidt—and that now I had to get up and take my place—that of the penitent sinner—

Then for the first time I approached the lattice of the confessional. "Not even we old Catholics draw near to Sinai without trembling," Father Brinkmann had said to me the day before, during a last talk. And in spite of all practical and theoretical preparation, in spite of all good will, it was a strange and difficult moment for a young disciple of Brandes of the year 1884, for a recent Bohemian of "Bernina," when the step was taken into the dim confessional—the step away from the bright world of freedom of thought and action, the step in beneath law and dogma, the step in behind the concealing curtain, in before the delegate of Rome, who sat there waiting motionless in the gloom, with the magic stole over his shoulders, with authority to remit sins or to retain them, to open the door to heaven or to the abyss. . . .

III

"You have been pursued by grace," said a man's soft, deep voice above my bowed head, when everything had been told and the last item on the list had been confessed. "Like Paul you have again and again kicked against the goad and refused to surrender. Until at last the light dazzled you so much that you became blind to everything else—to the whole of that world in which you had lived before, its pleasures, its friendships, and you saw only One—Him, from whom you tried in vain to escape; heard only one Voice, a sad and reproachful one: "I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest. *Ego sum Jesus, quem persequeris.*"

"Do not persecute Him any longer, then, do not seek any more to escape from Him. He wants you, He has sought you out as the Good Shepherd seeks the lost sheep. To you as to Paul and all His disciples He says

now: *Veni, sequere me.* Do not pursue me, follow me!"

"The old things have passed away, all things have become new. Forget your past, it is blotted out in the blood of the Son of God. You are now to become a child of God, and the love of God, the providence of God will lead you, protect you and help you in all your ways. All the evil you have done you can still make good again, what has been lost you can regain; begin everything again from the beginning and live a new life to the glory of God, the good of your neighbour and the salvation of your immortal soul.

"You are not yet received into the Catholic Church and I can therefore not give you holy absolution. I shall expect you here in the confessional to-morrow after the solemnity of reception. To-day I must restrict myself to giving you my blessing."

And upon my joyously bowed head descended the Latin words of benediction. I wrapped myself in a large sign of the Cross as in a cloak: *In nomine Patris—et Filii—et Spiritus Sancti. Amen.*

I count that day as the real day of my reception into the Catholic Church. There are sentences in the diary in which everything is said: "Feeling of joy. Fulness of faith. Long walk in the sunshine." It was my first experience of the truth of the evangelical promise: "Give up and thou shalt receive." You believe that you are turning your back on the light, that you are going into the gloom—and through the dim confessional you step out, as if into a morning of spring and feel like a tree that is putting forth new buds.

What matter then if after this day of sunshine, cold, frost and dull skies come back again—doubts and comfortlessness? That the reception itself did not bring me the feeling of happiness I had expected—that there was still a moment when everything seemed to fall to pieces for me? Yet on that 16th of February I did not

swear falsely when, with my hand on the Gospels, in the presence of Father Brinkmann and good witnesses, I made the vow "to live and die in the holy Catholic faith, so help me God and His holy Gospel." I have kept my vow to this day and would gladly make it again and only hope to renew it on my deathbed, face to face with Eternity. . . .

But during the first days after my reception I suffered terribly from the feeling—as I wrote—"of having been shipwrecked in port." Minute by minute I went through in memory all that had happened, to find out *whether* and *how* I had failed. "I began the day with a good intention, heard Low Mass at half-past eight, and, as it was Sunday, High Mass at ten. I was determined to be received into the Church, determined to be a Catholic. There is no doubt about that," says the diary.

"Perhaps, though, I went to the ceremony without sufficient seriousness. After the difficult confession I looked forward to the other ceremony with a certain bright gaiety. I looked upon it as a light and pleasant event at which it could not be difficult for me to acquit myself creditably.

"The consequence of this was that I did not present myself for reception with any strong feeling of solemnity. It was something I was willing to do, and I should be careful to perform my share of it correctly. There may have been a slight self-complacency in my feelings about it.

"I remember that before saying the Tridentine confession of faith I prayed to the Mother of God, before whose altar I was standing, that I might utter the words without a trembling in my voice or becoming confused—which easily happens to me on occasions when I have to read aloud in the presence of others. I therefore took great pains to give a clear and correct reading; I remember too, that I enjoyed the re-echoing of my own voice in the church.

"Then came the moment when the thought darted into me that here was I standing and becoming a Catholic. There was a shooting pain of doubt: 'Do you believe all this? *Can* you believe all this?' There was an interior protest when I read the words about indulgences and obedience to the Pope—and in a flash came the thought, 'You can always go back again!' But I remember that the thought appalled me and I drove it away . . . .

"Then came the profession of faith. When the blessed candle was given to me my left hand shook and my right was moist with perspiration. I continued saying the words that had to be said, in a strong, clear voice, but my heart felt empty and cold. Father Brinkmann wept with emotion—I was ashamed at the sight of his tears. As a sort of comfort for myself I determined to be present at the next reception that might take place, in order to enjoy the devotion I had missed at my own. I also resolved to prepare myself very carefully for my first communion.

"Then I handed back the blessed candle, the book was closed and put away, I was surrounded and congratulated. Father Brinkmann was radiant, stooping close to my ear he whispered, 'Are you happy now?' I looked up, looked into his good, honest face, nodded faintly. I felt absolutely nothing at all. Nothing remained but a great void, a horrible disappointment. It seemed to me that I had been acting a part and I was profoundly ashamed of it. 'Oh, my God, have mercy upon me and send light into the tangled darkness of my soul!' " (Feb. 18).

Shortly before my reception I had published my little book, *Truth and Falsehood of Life*. The stir which it created was a great surprise to me and in my state of spiritual darkness extremely painful. "The papers are singing my praise," says the diary, "and Masses of thanksgiving have been said in Fulda and Prague, in Assisi and La Rocca for the deceitful conversion of this poor liar!" I contemplated writing to Mogens, who was

staying with the Franciscans in Fulda, to Verkade, with the Benedictines in Prague, to tell them the truth. One review, which had said that my little book was a "harlequin costume which I had made myself for the Carnival," filled me with horror. Why, it was on the very Sunday before Lent that I had been received!

The days wore on, I continued digging into those decisive moments to find out what I had really felt, thought, willed. "When I presented myself at the church," I argued, it was undoubtedly my intention to become a Catholic. I came without any doubts and without any intention to deceive. I felt a certain cool resolution: "This was to be done, therefore I would do it." But what was the motive of this resolution? No doubt my conviction, more and more firmly established, of the truth of Catholic doctrine. This conviction has often given way in me. Did it not give way at that very decisive moment? Was I lacking in faith, or lacking only in sensible faith? As far as the doctrine about the Sacrament of the Altar, I was still quite firm. It was at the words about indulgences and obedience to the Pope that disquiet arose—and then the thought: "You can always come out again!" but it appalled me. What was troubling me, then, was lack of devotion, not lack of faith. I was ashamed because I was so unmoved, so not-happy, so cold. I had not the feeling that "my heart was melting like ice in the Father's hand," and because of that I was ashamed at the sight of Father Brinkmann's tears. I remember that when I had pronounced the vow and the candle was taken out of my hand I felt a kind of despair and a great emptiness. "Now it is done!" I looked up at the Mother of God and thought, "Have I come any nearer to Her?" And when I saw the sacristan looking at me I thought, "Alas, now he is thinking that I am giving thanks to the Mother of God." On my way home I met two literary friends—and a terrible feeling of falsehood over-

whelmed me. Oh, my God, am I the most repulsive of all hypocrites?

Ash Wednesday came. The diary contains this record:

"Oh, my God and Saviour, what is happening to me, what is to become of me? This morning I was signed with the Cross in ashes on my brow, and over me were uttered the words, *Memento homo*—"Remember, oh man, that thou art dust, and to dust thou shalt return." I came away from the altar amongst the others, like the others, with folded hands, and felt again so empty, and alas! so foolish. . . .

"Then there was a knock at the door and in came Rasmus Clausen, the missionary of the back-yards in Copenhagen. I knew him by sight, I remember seeing him one day distributing tracts along the pavement, stopping to say a few words to a girl in a scarlet blouse and velvet slippers worn down at the heels. And now, as he sat in my room, with his large, apostolic face and gently shining blue eyes and congratulated me on having found *peace*, I winced, I was ashamed—for I had *not* the peace of which he spoke. I felt so worldly with all my intellectual and controversial Catholicism, so much a stranger to and so far removed from his joy in Christ. I did not feel *positively* with him, only when we came to a criticism of the spirit of the times did I agree with him negatively and intellectually, and it seemed to me that I was like the people of whom he spoke, those who went to church, but who really belonged to the world. I felt that my book only described an *intellectual* conversion, not one of the heart, and that I did not possess that costly Pearl, the lustre which shone from the eyes of the old missionary, that peace which no blessed ashes and no rosary can give me.

"He looked for the Holy Scriptures on my table and did not find them. On the other hand, two volumes of Dom Guéranger's *L'Année Liturgique*, and other satis-

faction of the spirit. Of a sudden it seemed as if all the devoutness of the Jesuits down there in Stenosgade shrivelled into formulæ and ceremonies. It became so twisted, so artificial to think about. Empty words, empty gestures, I thought all at once.

"I believed I possessed Christ because I possessed the true Church. Now I ask myself: 'Has any Catholic, has Ballin or Verkade, Padre Felice or Father Brinkmann made that unutterable impression upon me of possessing Christ, of being at peace?' They have given me the impression of being *intellectually convinced*, of being so firm in their conviction that they would be ready to burn heretics—and also willing to give their own bodies to be burnt.

"But the peace of God, the Pearl?

"Is the confidence of Catholicism a *natural*, *external* confidence, founded on logic and history? As their worship is natural, external, depending on forms and ceremonies, *opus operatum?*

"Have I once again sought myself—sought satisfaction for my spirit in dogmatics and church history, for my senses in cult and liturgy? Is that why I have found the Church, but not Christ?

"Is it external ecclesiasticism, not interior certainty of salvation, that is bestowed by Catholicism? Brain faith and formal devotion? Is a Catholic out of communion with the living God? Is that why Catholic books of devotion constantly speak of one's feeling 'hard,' 'dry,' 'cold,' 'comfortless,' in spite of all one's prayers? Was that why I felt disappointed when I was received? I could not feel that it brought me nearer to God.

"Clausen was so downright, so genuine, so evangelical and apostolic. And with all my Catholic manner I felt so artificial and formal—like the small altar to the Sacred Heart which I have set up in a corner of my room, with flowers, candlesticks, a small sanctuary lamp of ruby

glass in front of a polychrome statuette—which the old missionary contemplates with a long, silent look of disapproval."

After Clausen had gone I stood a moment as though paralysed. The post had brought me on the same day the Swedish pietist, Rosenius's book, *Guidance to Peace*, sent anonymously. I had read it, and it had seemed to me, as it had done during my talk with the missionary, that I came under the category of the Evangelical Christians who condemn those "who do not possess a living, real faith, but have only in carnal certitude found it easy to believe." Was it impossible, then, for me to become a Christian? Did God not *wish* it? There were "vessels of dishonour"—and if one happened to be such a vessel——

In this hour of my need I remembered Francis of Assisi, and what *he* did, when he was harassed by doubt. Not in vain had I read the story in the second chapter of "The Little Flowers"—of how Saint Francis three times running opened the Missal in order to find out the will of God. I knelt down and prayed as I had not prayed for a long while, prayed to the *real* God, to the God who is the deepest, the unalterable ground of existence, the pillar of truth, the rock of ages. I prayed so that it must have moved a stone, not to speak of Our Father, who is in Heaven. Then I took up the Book—not the Missal, but the Holy Gospels, the New Testament. I opened it with my eyes closed, placed my finger blindly on the page, opened my eyes and read the text which I had found in this way. It read:

"Now these avoid. For of this sort are they who creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, who are led away with divers desires: Ever learning, and never attaining to the knowledge of the truth" (II Tim. Ch. iii, vv. 6–7).

The impression of having received an answer was overwhelming. *They who creep into houses*—And was it

not exactly my failing, *ever* (to be) *learning, and never attaining to the knowledge of the truth.*

"But continue thou in those things which thou hast learned, and which have been committed to thee: knowing of whom thou hast learned them," I read further on in the same chapter. Yes, indeed, I *knew* from whom I had learned—from the Catholic Church, "the pillar and ground of truth," from him to whom Jesus had said: "Thou art the rock." I had invoked Cephas and Cephas had answered.

In the evening—it was a Friday—I went to the devotion of the Stations of the Cross at the church of the Sacred Heart. This devotion is originally Franciscan, and from the lips of Father Brinkmann, I heard, at each of the fourteen stations along the Way of Suffering, the prayer which the Church has inherited from Saint Francis: "We adore Thee, O Christ, and praise Thee, because by Thy holy Cross Thou hast redeemed the world." What more did I want, what did I look for more than this confession of the power of the Cross? What could I desire beyond that of following Jesus with the holy women on the path of His sufferings from Gabbatha to Golgotha, and perhaps helping Simon of Cyrene a little to carry the Cross? Why did I believe in a deeper, purer, truer Christianity than that of the song of Mary's sorrows:

Wounded in His every wound,
Steep my soul till it hath swoon'd
In His very blood away.

Let me to my latest breath
In my body bear the death
Of that dying Son of thine.

IV

The accounts were made up then, with free-thinking, with the past, with Methodism and Lutheran pietism. I was a Catholic—I would have to arrange my life on a Catholic basis. Five days after my reception my wife had presented me with a daughter—there was now the question of working for the augmented family.

The work became easy to me because I was happy. The diary says: "I feel more and more strongly the infinite beauty and value of life, and I desire only to use each moment reasonably and to the highest purpose. Oh God, let nothing have happened which can separate me from Thee—let me really in earnest be united to Thy Holy Church" (Feb. 27). "All things grow deeper and more beautiful to me as day succeeds day—all the colours of life richer" (Feb. 29). "All doubts flee at the simple words: 'I believe in the Holy Catholic Church.' 'Deep sense of communion, profound joy'" (March 7).

For a month after being received, I still went to Father Brinkmann for instruction to prepare for my first communion. At this time I read, amongst other books, Möhler's *Symbolism*, Gihr: *Das heilige Messopfer*, and Martin von Cochem's book bearing the same title. Besides these, works by ascetic authors, especially Saint Alphonsus. Taking these works for my guides, I began a conflict with my character and its many failings. On a small piece of paper which I put in my prayer-book, I noted down my chief faults in order to be able to confess them better and fight against them. "My God," says the diary, "let me know my sin *to its roots*, so that I may not in any way deceive myself" (March 10).

Then, on March 14th, I made my *second* confession, again to Father Joseph Schmidt. At my urgent request he allowed me, privately, only in his presence, to repeat once more the Tridentine Creed. "But it was not neces-

sary," the wise and even-minded Jesuit added, "you do not know yourself how firmly you believe."

The next day, in that year the fourth Sunday in Lent, Lætare Sunday, I received Holy Communion for the first time. In the diary I wrote out the Latin words with which the Mass begins on that day: "Rejoice with joy, you that have been in sorrow: that you may exult and be filled from the breasts of your consolation." And then: "Entire, joy, entire certainty, entire peace, tears of bliss." More it is not necessary to say.

On March 19th Mogens Ballin completed his twenty-fifth year and celebrated his coming of age by making me a present of a journey abroad. He wanted me to spend my first Easter in Catholic surroundings and arranged for me to stay with the Benedictines at Beuron. Nearly two years had passed since I first set out on my travels. I now fared southwards again, this time as a Catholic.

As yet, though, as a quite new and green Catholic, and a Catholic who continued to be a poet. The Catholic went to the monastery at Beuron, but the poet chose to go thither by way of Würzburg, to see the town about which Thor Lange[1] had written in one of his folk-songs: "In Würzburg the bells are ringing in a feast." On the way, between family life and a monastic cell, I was still for a short while the free wanderer, the sensitive vagabond, and stood romantically dreaming one moonlight night in Würzburg on the old bridge over the Main. "Moonlight on the flowing water, moonlight over the heights about the town and the old castle at the top, where a solitary candle is lit. Heine's verses rose in my mind, Schumann's music, Ingeborg Stuckenberg's voice: *Still ist die Nacht, es ruhen die Gassen—in diesem Hause wohnte mein Schatz*. . . . Leaning against one of the rococo saints on the bridge, I tried to sing the words softly, though I have no voice for singing, and the music went

[1] See footnote Vol. 1, pp. 70–71.

through me, as when one turns a sword in a wound : '*in* diesem *Hause—wohnte mein* Schatz'—'yonder . . . . in that house. . . . Once I had seen 'Her' house like that, from afar, at home in Svendborg. . . .

"Through old, narrow streets, here gloomy in the shadow, there white in the moonlight, back to the hotel. A Sister of Mercy hurries past me, the crucifix gleams upon her black habit. And underneath the saint's statue at the corner, who is twanging his lute there ? Ah, can I still meet you, Mephisto ?

"In the coffee-room of the hotel, at a table covered with a bright-coloured cloth, the habitual guests are chatting and laughing, talking politics and smoking, with tall tankards of good, brown Würzburg beer in front of them. An eager little man is talking religion, and is severe on the patriarch Jacob because of his behaviour to Esau. 'And that is supposed to be an example to us ?' he exclaims indignantly. The landlord's daughter sits at the head of the table and allows the guests to make love to her—she is dark-haired and dark-eyed, now and then she laughs, her round, white throat bent far back—*die Wirthin Töchterlein* of the folk-song. I pay my bill, I want to leave the next morning. The head waiter asks whether I am coming back from Stuttgart and regretfully I answer no.

"Then I am alone in my room. The full moon stands round and bright behind the slender spire of Count Eckhardt's tower. Ah, how poor I am, and with what profound despair do I not love life, the great and wonderful, which I have misused and wasted ! *Unseliger Faust, was thuest du hier ?*" (March 29).

In this romantic mood I arrived at Beuron, on the Monday in Holy Week. But if there is anything which cannot be combined with romanticism it is a monastery. If there is anyone who is not in the least romantic, it is a monk. I remember Father Brinkmann's words of contempt about Goethe's Werther : "Not to want to do

anything definite, not to think clearly about anything, to stagger about like a drunken man in vague, languishing feelings—is that supposed to be the highest?" To the monk the poet's life of moods is necessarily a waste of soul. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul and all thy mind and thy neighbour as thyself!" In that scheme of life there is no room for the elfin-dance of Nature-spirits. "Herr S., what does the moonlight really matter to you?" said an old lay brother to a young Dane who wanted to be a monk somewhere in Germany. "You leave the moonlight alone, no matter whether it is green or blue. Draw your curtains, say your prayers, and go to bed!" I had felt this state of opposition strongly the first time I was in Beuron, during a summer of abundant flowers. I felt it again now, as I returned in the full tide of the re-awakening of spring. I felt that here I came from unrest to peace, from moods to thought, from feeling to will.

On the wall in the guest-cell which had been allotted to me—the same as that of two years before—there was a picture of the Thorn-crowned Jesus—and beneath it this verse:

O suchst du Rosenschimmer
und siehst dies Dornenhaupt,
so hast geliebt du nimmer
und nimmer recht geglaubt.[1]

This was the poetry of the cloister, this was the answer of Christianity to romanticism. I stood before the picture and felt the contrast between these words and my poetic predilections—or weaknesses. "What ought I not to be—and what was I? A poor romantic, with no thought but for my own dear heart!" Before I went to

[1] Oh seekest thou fragrant roses
And seest this thorn-crowned Head,
Then never hast thou loved
And never truly believed—

rest I prayed the old prayer of Saint Benedict, *Crux sacra sit mihi lux :*

> Oh, Holy Cross, light thou my way,
> Lest to the dragon's path I stray.
> Hence from me, Satan, with thy wiles,
> Tears are the harvest of thy smiles.
> The cup thou givest me for my fall,
> Drink thou thyself, 'tis bitter gall.

I had arrived in Holy Week and the monastery was filling with guests who wished to take part in the liturgical services of the holy days. The arch-abbey of Saint Martin, the official name of the monastery at Beuron, was not then the large modern block of buildings now capable of accommodating a whole regiment of visitors in its guest quarters, which are provided with central heating and electric light, like a hotel. We were but few guests and we had our rooms on the first floor in the oldest part of the monastery, not far from the Abbot's cell. The large rooms with polished floors and heavy, old-fashioned furniture were only inadequately heated by a huge, majolica stove, and we were miserably cold until after mid-day, when the sun came round to our side of the house. But we were not much in our cells, most of the time we were in the church following the service with the aid of the large, Benedictine breviary, of which copies had been lent to us.

I have written a whole book about that Holy Week and that Easter at Beuron, and will not here repeat anything of what I wrote in it. But during each day that I spent there the Latin liturgy washed more and more of the old leaven away from my heart and made it, as one of the prayers said, *capax sanctae novitatis*—capable of holding the new, sacred wine.

On the Wednesday afternoon the monks began to sing *Tenebrae*, and word after word in the old Psalms whipped me like scourges. "Because I have not known

literature" (learning), David cried, "I will enter into the powers of the Lord: O Lord, I will be mindful of thy justice alone" (Ps. 70). While all *my* life had been nothing but literature! "They who go far from thee shall perish; thou destroyest all them that are disloyal to thee" (Ps. 72). But going away from God, loving "life" far away from Him—was not that my constant temptation? "It is good for a man to have borne the yoke from his youth," says the prophet. Ah, I had been one of the emancipated—and would I not always be longing for the freedom I had given up? And that in spite of all my bitter experiences from the time when "my soul was filled with evils, and my life had drawn nigh to hell. I was counted among them that go down to the pit: I was become as a man without help. Thou laidest me in the lower pit: in the dark places, and in the shadow of death. Thy wrath is strong over me: and all thy waves thou hast brought in upon me" (Ps. 87).

But the sacred chants had other notes too, notes of hope and compensation for him who *would* rise from the dead. "I believe to see the good things of the Lord in the land of the living. Expect the Lord: do manfully. And let thy heart take courage: and wait thou for the Lord" (Ps. 26). And these exulting words of the prophet: "The living, the living, he shall give praise to thee, as I do this day: the father shall make thy truth known to the children. O Lord, save me, and we will sing our psalms all the days of our life in the house of the Lord."[1]

One of the guests at the monastery with whom I became more closely acquainted was a young doctor of philosophy from Munich, named Diemand, who was staying at Beuron to try his vocation for the religious life. During Easter week we went for many walks together, through the valley, along the banks of the Danube to "St Maurus im Felde," or to the woods where the trees were in the full flush of spring buds, and over the

[1] Isaiah xxxviii.

grey chalk cliffs to Burg Werenwag or Burg Wildenstein. "Impressions of Dr. D.'s thorough culture. He has studied Greek for seven years, writes Latin, is interested in forestry, engineering, geology. So different from the shallow æstheticism I have been used to at home." "A walk up to the woods on the mountains with D. and found his feeling for Nature as delicate as that of any Danish poet. *Die Amsel dort ! Und dort eine andere ! Sie singen sich einander zu !* Then he stood still and listened with delight." "Impressions as a whole of D. : Culture, amiability, lofty morals (his self-sacrifice for his family, whom he had entirely supported after his father's death. Now that they are all able to support themselves he is at last free to follow his religious vocation). He gave me as a keepsake a small picture of Saint Benedict and asked me to remember him now and then in my prayers. 'I like to give away such pictures, in that way many an Our Father is said for one.' How simply that spectacled man of thirty said this ! Ah, to have been born a Catholic !"

In a depressed mood I returned to a lonely colloquy with the Danish convert, Mr. Jörgensen. "I feel nothing but the deepest shame over myself," says the diary. "All my life has been unscrupulous, smilingly unscrupulous and amiably characterless. I do not understand how I have been endured so long by God and man" (April 6).

Then I take stock of myself morally. I do it in monastic Latin, that which was for me the finest Latin. I translate the somewhat barbaric text :

"There are two beings in me. The natural being which is hard and sensual, and the Christian being which is gentle and warm-hearted. The first comes to life in the solitude of Nature, the other in the monastic cell and in the society of good Christians. May God in His mercy grant me a firm will to contend against and subdue the former of these two, and to bring forward and train up the latter, the new man. Cowardice advises me rather

to surrender to the former, as being the better known; courage wills the victory of the good man. From which I learn that the soul of Christianity is *manliness*, while the essence of naturalism, of pagan sensuality, is weakness and effeminacy."

I was later to read the same definition in Saint Catherine of Siena. I did not know her yet, however. On the other hand, while at Beuron, I made acquaintance with another saint—one of the greatest perhaps, that has ever existed—Saint Benedict. *Legislator universalis*, Pope Stephen III calls him, "the law-giver of the world." Out of the chaos of the Great Migration he built up the cosmos of the Middle Ages, and what did he build it up with? With a monastic rule, that is, with a regulation, with a law. I have said it elsewhere, I repeat it here: From the beginning to the last day Rome's great word is *Law*, LEX. The historic task of Rome and the work entrusted to her by God is the setting in order of humanity, bringing the barbarian under the law and civilising nature. But order and law and civilisation are like horticulture and forestry: it involves felling, pruning, clipping, weeding; if necessary, clearing with the axe or scorching new lands with fire. That is the spirit of Rome, that is the spirit of Roman Christianity, that is the Benedictine spirit. Not life in wild growth, in a romantic state of nature, but life under the law, life in obedience to rule, life in honour and discipline, in peace of soul and in beauty which is stern and pure like the face of a young monk.

To attain this end Benedict gave to the world two means: prayer and work. "Prayer and work are the two mill-stones which, driven by obedience, crush the egoism of man and grind him into nourishing flour," says a Benedictine writer. It was not solitude Benedict desired for his monks, nor for mankind in general. He knew, as Petrarch did later, that "nothing is more dangerous for man than to be free, idle and alone." Not solitude did he

want, but life in community, family life (the name "abbot" means "father"). Not idleness, not even pious idleness was his wish, but a life bound by rule, in obedience, law-abidingness, in a fixed order of the day and a strictly kept time-table.

Work as the essence of man's worship of God, that was the great thought with which I left Beuron after spending a fortnight in the hospitable monastery and again travelled northwards. "Grant me, Oh God," says the diary, "no longer to be like a child at school, looking out of the window all the time and longing for play and for the garden on the other side of the street. Have mercy upon my heart! It is not worth much—altogether I am not worth much. But take it up, as one takes up a stone on the road, and carry me home amongst thy treasures of bright diamonds!" (April 14).

I went home to Denmark by way of the Rhine. Visited Freiburg im Breisgau—the wonderful spire of the Minster, the river Dreisam running like limpid brooks through all the streets. Visited Strassburg, where I did *not* remember Goethe, but went to Compline in Erwin of Steinbach's cathedral. "Evening service in the Dom . . . . a boy's clear voice quivering on the highest note as on the highest string of a violin, soaring up in the gloom: *Redemisti nos*, *Domine*, *Deus veritatis*. A couple of candles in the dim chancel, a white sheet of music."

From Bingen to Coblenz and from Coblenz to Cologne I went by steamer. Then I saw the silver-grey Rhine for the first time, and the vine-fields covering the hills like a richly-hued carpet; the mouse-tower in Binger Loch, the old grey Bacharach, the rock of the Loreley—all the romantic Rhine. At Coblenz I got out—I had an introduction to the editor of the *Koblenzer Volkszeitung*, the paper of the Centre Party, Dr. Eduard Marcour. The introduction was from Father Brinkmann, who was Marcour's uncle, and its object was to obtain

an entrance for me in the Press of the German Centre. Amongst certain qualities of mine, my dear old tutor had emphasized what he called my *Gebetsgeist*.[1] Perhaps it was not exactly the introduction required when seeking a post as journalist. Anyhow nothing practical came of the visit and I forgot this visit to Coblenz so completely, that many years after, when I again visited the pleasant town between the Rhine and Moselle, and came to Jesuitenplatz, it struck me like a remembrance of a dream, that here I had been before—Ah, Coblenz, Coblenz, which later grew so familiar and so dear to me—Coblenz, where I have had so many happy days with the kindest of good friends—and Coblenz and the friends are lost to me. . . .

In the evening the steamer cast anchor at "Leystapel." I was in Cologne. From my hotel, "Fränkischer Hof," in Komödienstrasse, I went the same evening to pay my first visit to Her Majesty, the *Kölner Dom*. Few buildings have made such an impression upon me as the vast, grey cathedral, whose towers rise so mighty and so firm above the three portals. And few towns in the world have seized me so strongly as Cologne—by its atmosphere, its air, its very name: *Köln, Köln, Köln*—it is like the very booming of *la Gloriosa*. A time came in my life when *Kölner Domplatz* became one of the market squares I traversed most frequently—*Kölner Domplatz*—and another square in Cologne, where it always seemed to me that there was so much peace, so much hope, so much expectation of joy—the provincially quiet, monastically closed square of Sancta Maria im Kapitol; it seemed sunshiny even in dull or rainy weather. This, too, is of the past, *Köln* is a lost treasure amongst all the other lost treasures. . . .

The day after my first arrival in Cologne was a Sunday and I spent nearly the whole day in the Cathedral. In the morning the Rosary was said aloud during Low

[1] Spirit of prayer.

Mass and the sound of the praying multitude beat like waves about me. At High Mass the enormous cathedral was filled to the last seat—I was impressed to see so many well-dressed young men on their knees, regardless of their Sunday trousers. At the service of Vespers, Cardinal Krementz was present; I saw him leave the church, giving his blessing on either side with lifted crimson hands. Finally Compline, and as at Strassburg, there was a boy's frail soprano, which from a great height hurled forth the exulting confession: *Redimisti nos, Domine, Deus veritatis.* Early that morning I had been to confession and received the Sacrament of the Altar. And in unison with the compelling, clear, silvery voice, I, too, cried: "Thou hast redeemed us, oh God of truth!"

V

It is well known that happy people have no history. That is why there are now some most uninteresting years in my life.

True to the resolve I had made at Beuron, after my return home, I arranged my day on as monastic a plan as possible and kept to it. It was in the spring, summer was not far away and I fixed the time-table for the day as follows: Rise at 6 a.m. Mass at 7 (in the church in Stenosgade). 7.30–8 Breakfast—newspapers. 8–12 Work. 12–1 Lunch. 1–2 Recreation. 2–5 Work. 5–7 Dinner—Recreation. 7–9 Walk. 9 Supper. 9.30 Prayers. 10 Bed.

Immediately after my return I began to write my book about Beuron (originally called *In Saint Benedict's House*). The diary says, "Pious, happy days, feeling of being blessed by God. We are all very happy; I have a deep, wonderful feeling of the blessedness of life, of the goodness of God. It is spring; I work all day. Towards evening we go out walking, we work in the garden or we have visitors (two Catholic acquaintances, one a retired

military auditor from Fredericia, the other a daughter of a once well-known convert and translator of the Church Fathers, a friend of Grundtvig[1] and Gunni Busck: C. Höffding-Muus). "In a corner of my study we have set up a small altar, before which we pray in the evening; my little son joins in the prayers and has learned to make the sign of the Cross" (April 27–29). "The critic, C. Lambek, sent me an article about myself and for a moment I thought: 'That is what you were once! And now—now you are absorbed in gaining indulgences! You have been unfaithful to yourself!' Then I seized my old books, in which my self was stored. And I thank Thee, oh God, that I have become unfaithful to my self!" (May 2). "This morning had a great joy. Met Ludvig Find[2] and fell into talk with him. And discovered that during my absence he had become a Christian and was very happy because of it. His parents, Pastor Henry Ussing, finally my little, unworthy book, had done it, plus the grace of God. He thought that many were tired of the old state of things and would like to take the step, but were shy of doing so. We talked about the *reality* of life, which had but now come into existence for us, and about the spring, which was so pure and delicate in its green coolness." "In the evening to May devotions in the Rosary church. Afterwards, about ten o'clock, sat in the garden behind the house, under the large budding trees which were black against the pale grey sky. The air was mild and fragrant. I thought of Knut Hamsun's[3] new book, of its title, *The Game of Life*. No, not the game of life, but the seriousness of life, is happiness. To have one's God, one's work, one's home, and to sit quietly at eventide under the trees like the patriarch—that is happiness!" (May 5).

At that time there were but few Catholic churches

[1] See footnote, Vol. 1, p. 22.
[2] An artist.
[3] See footnote, Vol. 1, p. 156.

in Copenhagen. St. Ansgar's in Bredgade, the Rosary church in Boyesgade, the church of the Sacred Heart in Stenosgade, the hospital church in Griffenfeldtsgade, finally, the chapel of the Sisters of Saint Joseph on the Strandvej—where the distinguished French Abbé Desnos, was chaplain—that was all. The parish priest at St. Ansgar's was Father Braun; his curate, the jovial Father Johansen; the Bishop's secretary, the wise and pleasant Father Henry Gamél, who had had a French education. Above all of them was the Bishop, the Right Reverend, the Bishop, as the old Catholics used to say; Votre Grandeur, as the Sisters of Saint Joseph (who were French) addressed him; Monseigneur Johannes von Euch, Bishop of Anastasiopolis *in partibus infidelium*, Domestic Prelate to His Holiness, Vicar Apostolic of Denmark ("and Iceland" was added later).

Seldom, perhaps, has a man in so great a degree been in the right place as Bishop von Euch in Denmark. On the last feast of Saint Agnes, January 21st of this year, 1917, he completed his eighty-third year, and the hour in which he lays down the crozier for ever cannot be far distant. But who shall take up the inheritance after him? Who shall continue the great task which he began with so mighty a will, with such inexhaustible energy? Who can walk in the footsteps of this giant?

It is not without reason that Johannes von Euch during his long rule as bishop should suggest to his listeners the thought of his great predecessor Absalon.[1]

[1] Absalon. (1128-1201). Archbishop and statesman, son of Asger Rig, a Danish nobleman, and with his brother, Esbern Snare, educated together with Knud Lavard's son, later King Valdemar the Great. Resolved to become a priest and studied for some years in Paris but returned before 1157 and was soon made Bishop of Roskilde, later becoming Archbishop of Lund. The great work of his life was the conquest of the heathen Vends who incessantly invaded Denmark. It was he who organised the army and strengthened the vacillating king, and his efforts were rewarded by the victory at Rügen in 1169, after which the island was placed under the see of Roskilde. The foundation of the city of Copenhagen is due to Absalon, who in his farsightedness saw that

There is something of Absalon in his appearance—and, what is more important, there is Absalon in his soul. When the time comes—may it be far off—when a stone is to be erected on the grave of the great bishop, it should bear the inscription : "He raised up the Catholic Church again in Denmark."

For it is scarcely too much to say that when Bishop von Euch in his turn took up the inheritance left by Monsignor Grüder, Catholicism was regarded as a curiosity by cultivated Danes (and by the people as foolishness. To be "Catholic" in one's mind meant being "rather queer in the upper storey"). A poetic curiosity, if you like, something about little abbés and Albert Küchler[1] in his monastery on the Palatine, and

the capital of Denmark ought to be a seaport with a central position. The great development of the city has proved that he was right and the citizens of Copenhagen have acknowledged their indebtedness to the great warrior-bishop by placing his statue above the main entrance of the Town Hall. The royal castle of Christiansborg is built on the site where Absalon's fortress castle once stood. With all his care for the defence of the country against the foes outside it Absalon did not forget his work as a bishop and he established many parishes and religious houses, several of the latter also having schools, besides which he built churches and made good laws. Bishop Absalon was a great and harmonious personality, with a pure and upright character ; he set himself high aims and laboured with great energy at their realisation. His name is perhaps the greatest in the history of Denmark.

[1] Küchler, Albert (1803-1886). Painter of historical and other subjects, born in Copenhagen, Was awarded the gold medal of the Danish Academy for his picture "Tobias and the Angel." Amongst his early pictures, that of a studio scene is said to be one of his best and it is now on the Danish National Art Museum. In 1829 K. was awarded the large gold medal for his picture "Jesus healing the Sick," and in 1831 he obtained a travelling stipend enabling him to go to Munich and thence to Italy, whither he travelled on foot. While in Rome he painted scenes of popular life, but gradually he turned more and more to religious subjects and painted altar pictures, such as the Annunciation and the Resurrection. In 1844 he became a Catholic and seven years later he entered the order of the Friars Minor under the name of Fra Pietro. After becoming a Franciscan, K.'s work was entirely devoted to the service of the Church, but in 1866, on the dissolution of the monastery, he returned to life in the world, his sole means of living then consisting of a small pension from the Italian government, eked out by an allowance from his own country. K. died in Rome in 1886 and was buried in

Carl Bloch's[1] monk standing at the window and gazing wistfully out upon the evening glow, dreaming of the domestic joys he has forfeited. It was all very pretty and full of sentiment and belonged to Italy, like macaroni and serenading and *Addio bella Napoli*. But who would dream of being a Catholic in Copenhagen—still less in Korsör!

During the long period of Bishop von Euch's episcopate the incalculably great result of his life is this: that at the present day it is possible to be a Catholic both in Copenhagen and in Korsör, nay, even out on the moors in Jutland. Bishop von Euch has shown Denmark that Catholicism is not a set scene for an opera, nor a Neapolitan *aria*, but that it is—I dare to say it—an unpoetic reality, something as unlike moonlight as a large block of red or yellow brick buildings, with all the most modern interior arrangements, and inhabited by Sisters of Mercy or schoolmasters or male nurses.

One thing more Johannes von Euch has achieved: under him Catholicism in Denmark has become Danish Catholicism. He, the stranger, who as a young man came

the small Catholic cemetery near the foot of the Cestius pyramid. He is mentioned in Bergsöe's novel, *Fra Piazza del Popolo*. (See footnote, p. 142).

[1] Bloch. Carl Heinrich (1834-1890). Danish painter, who first became known through his studies of the lives of fisher-folk on the Danish coast. Being granted a travelling scholarship by the Danish Academy he went to Rome, where, except for a few interruptions, during one of which he went to Greece, he spent the years 1859 to 1865. During these years he made diligent studies of Italian landscape and popular life and obtained the gold medal of the Danish Academy for his picture, "A Roman Street Barber." In his scenes of monastic life, though showing mostly a kindly sense of humour, and sometimes giving his subject a sentimental treatment, he is evidently strongly influenced by the Protestant traditions of his country. These pictures, however, are surpassed both in technique and in the treatment of their subjects, by his later work, such as his picture of the dying chancellor, Niels Kaas, handing over the keys of the realm to the young King Christian IV, and the series of twenty-three scenes from the Bible hanging in the church of Frederiksborg Castle, perhaps the best in the whole of his artistic production.

from the Cathedral at Osnabrück and richly developed church life in Westphalia, to the tiny chapel and the small congregation in Fredericia—he resolved from the very first to belong altogether to his new country. He determined to be a Dane amongst Danes, and he never wearied of asserting that what he brought was nothing new or foreign : it was the faith of our fathers and the Church of our mothers ; it was the Christianity which had been preached by Ansgar, for which Saint Canute had shed his blood, and in the shadow of whose blessed Sacraments Queen Dagmar[1] and Queen Margaret[2] had closed their eyes in everlasting rest.

Danish history was therefore already a favourite study with young Father von Euch. And how surrounded by Danish books and reviews was not the grey-haired, the silver white, the snow-white-haired Bishop von Euch when one went to see him in his small study overlooking the garden, on the first floor of 64 Bredgade. In that small room it often happened that he forgot the time, so that it was one or two o'clock in the morning before he could put down the latest novel by Jacob Knudsen, or the latest essays by Morten Pontoppidan or Olfert Ricard. Here in this small room the most Danish of all Danish peasants came to see him and could

[1] Dagmar. (d. 1212). Daughter of the King of Bohemia. Was married in 1209 to Valdemar Sejr (the Conqueror), but died three years later at Ribé (pronounced Ree-bé) in Jutland. The memory of this young and gentle queen has been preserved in several Danish folk-songs, the most touching being that which describes Dagmar's death and the King's ride in haste to Ribe, after having heard of the queen's illness during his absence. He outrode all his followers and "when he came to Ribe bridge, that lord was riding alone." It is said that Dagmar was dead when he arrived and in his grief he prayed that she might be re-awakened, and speak to him. His prayer was heard, and she told him that in Purgatory she had been reproached with the sin of having "laced her little silk sleeves one Sunday." This has since been used as the sign of a soul so innocent that it could not remember any graver transgression.

[2] Margrete. (1353-1412). Daughter of Valdemar Atterdag, married in 1363 to Haakon VI of Norway. One of the great figures in Danish history and distinguished for her unusual gifts of statesmanship. It was in her reign that Denmark, Norway and Sweden were united into one kingdom at the treaty of Kalmar in 1397.

speak to him in Grundtvig's tongue. Here Jens Busk became a Catholic.

Jens Busk was outside all Catholic groups. He went about everywhere, now paid a visit to the Sisters in a hospital (and was delighted when the sister portress recognised him at once and knew who he was!), now spent an evening over a glass of good Rhenish wine, discussing Socialism with a Catholic ecclesiastic who did not always agree with him. Often he would turn up at the "*Academicum catholicum*"[1] to hear a lecture, when he would hang up his fur coat in a corner and take an active part in the debate. I made his acquaintance on the occasion of an article which I had written about "Christian Democracy." Now and then he called on me for a talk in the evening, later I paid him a visit at his farm in Jutland, where he had had two small niches made in the walls of the homestead, in which to place statues of saints. When the new Catholic church in Horsens was built he founded a sanctuary lamp, for the intention, as he explained, that "Danish soil may begin again to be placed under the Church to the glory of God." A personality which had made a great impression upon him was that of Saint Birgitta of Sweden. He would read her life again and again, by himself or with his wife, and he was overjoyed when, as a result of this and other reading, his wife took the same step as he and was received into the Catholic Church. Though probably not conscious of it, he may have compared himself to the lord of Ulfasa, that powerful and God-fearing statesman, and with her refined and dignified manner Fru Busk was well fitted to personate Birger Persson's pious daughter.

This was what Copenhagen and Frederiksberg had to offer in the way of Catholicism twenty years ago. But then there was Ordrup, and Ordrup meant *Ordrupshöj*

[1] A Catholic Students' Society formed in 1896, and owing its origin to the efforts of an ardent young medical student, Aage Rasmussen, now a country doctor.

(Ordrup Mount), which rose like a mount of pilgrimage above the flat village midway between the variety pavilion near the coast road and the booths of the summer fair in the Deer Park.

Ordrup Mount! In earlier times, too, this name had had its cherished associations for me. That was in the days of zoology, not many years ago. With my friend Böving I often went out on zoological, botanical or fishing expeditions to the bog at Ordrup—J. P. Jacobsen's[1] Ordrup bog, which was a hallowed spot to us because it was said to have been there that he had caught the cold which led to consumption. Besides this the bog was rich in all kinds of interesting creatures; the salamanders were larger and finer than anywhere else and in a certain water-hole, unfortunately more or less filled up, grew that rare plant, Stratiotes aloides. I can still remember an afternoon in spring when Böving and I had stood there fishing in quiet, warm spring rain. On the other side were green rye-fields and brown woods, and as we packed up our fishing-tackle and looked across at the woods a sheen of verdure had come over them—the trees had broken into bud during the rain.

Now I was walking along the same road, but without Böving. And I did not walk to the end, I rang the bell at the porter's lodge of St. Andrew's College, and the old, stooping lay brother, always kind and always saying his rosary, came out and opened the door. I asked whether I could see Father Breitung and the brother answered in his broken Danish, "I will *ring* him!" by which he did not mean that he would put a ring in Father Breitung's nose before leading him in, but that the brother would call him down by ringing a bell. Meanwhile one was asked to wait in the parlour, but when it could be done without hurting the feelings of the kindly importunate brother one preferred sitting on the bench in the front hall, watching the fathers pass

[1] See footnote, Vol. 1, p. 79.

in their long, black cassocks, disappear up the stairs and vanish behind the brick columns of the arched corridor on the first floor. Here one felt a breath of Beuron, of Italy, of the great Catholic world towards the south.

Here, and in the house of the d'Auchamps, delightful "Mariabo." Often, often I must have passed the red gate of "Mariabo" in the tall, thick hawthorn hedge where the road, passing along the side of the college grounds, turns to the right, down to the bog. But I never noticed it; it was a red gate like so many other red gates, and least of all did I dream, as I passed it with my botany case slung over my shoulder, that a couple of years later I was to walk in at it with a Catholic rosary in my pocket.

Yet so it happened. In September 1896 Mogens Ballin had come home after staying with the Franciscans of Frauenberg at Fulda; it had become clear to him that he had no vocation for the monastic life. He made the acquaintance of the family at "Mariabo" and soon after introduced my wife and myself in that house. At "Mariabo" one was in the midst of Catholicism, far away from Protestant, sceptical or atheistic Denmark.

When I made his acquaintance Herr d'Auchamp was a man of a little over fifty years of age. His French origin could not be disguised: both his features, which reminded one of Napoleon, and his charming, courtly manners were decidedly Gallican. His wife, the refined little Fru Eugénie, belonged to a family of French *émigrés*, and her character was one of entire warm-heartedness and piety. There were four children, two sons and two daughters, of ages ranging from twenty to thirty. From their earliest years they had lived at "Mariabo," in the large house with the spacious rooms and in the extensive garden, now looking like a park, but in which Herr d'Auchamp had in the course of years

[1]The English equivalent would probably be simply "St. Mary's."

planted every tree himself. On a summer afternoon, when the tea-table was set out on the large, daisy-sprinkled lawn in front of the house, and the atmosphere was one of domestic happiness, youthful gaiety and innocent laughter at nothing at all—on a summer evening when Mogens and I, or Herr d'Auchamp and I strolled up and down one of the outer garden paths talking, while the two young girls gathered bunches of cowslips under the tall trees for the dinner-table—on such days, such evenings, one had the feeling that the world outside the high hedge was an evil dream and wondered why everybody did not live in such a cool, green and golden-sunny Eden.

In their earlier years the d'Auchamps had lived a long while in Rome and all the rooms were filled with mementoes of the Eternal City, which they had known in the time of Pius IX. Everywhere there were pictures or statuettes of saints, rosaries, seven-branched candle sticks, catacomb lamps, replicas of the Roman she-wolf and of Maderna's Saint Cecilia. On one table stood a large, fine reproduction of the antique triumphal chariot in the Vatican Museum. Between two copies of the angels which in St. Peter's support the holy water fonts, a door led into the chapel, where Mass was said every Sunday by a father from the adjacent College.

I did a great deal of work during these first years of my Catholic life. In 1896 I published, first *The Truth and Falsehood of Life*,[1] later on *Beuron*, in 1897 *Foes of Hell* (in defence of the Home Mission,[2] which was being violently attacked by Herman Bang[3] and the Social Democrats, especially the so-called "brimstone priests" and "hell-hounds") as well as the story *The Last Day*. *Parables* was published in 1898, also a collection of poems from the years after 1894. In 1899 was published *Conversion*, a series of lightly sketched portraits of con-

[1] See footnote, Vol. 1, p. 159.
[2] See footnote, Vol. 1, p. 22.
[3] See footnote, Vol. 1, p. 51.

verts, from Paul and Augustine to Brentano and Huysmans. While writing my books I also did journalistic work. In October I had been appointed a member of the staff of that mildly democratic organ of the middle-class, *Tiden*, and in December of the same year I became editorial secretary. I translated Sven Hedin's *Through Asia* for Ernst Bojesen, and when *Tiden* was withdrawn in 1898 I undertook the publication of a literary supplement to *Nordisk Ugeblad for katolske Kristne*. The supplement, which was given the challenging name of *The Catholic* did not, however, win the unmixed approval of my fellow-Catholics; they found (and justly so) that I had far too many accounts to settle with former friends, and that *The Catholic* was not the place for them. "You are always so angry," Herr d'Auchamp said to me one day, with a smile intended to convey great regret. And I *was* angry, because hate was stronger in me yet than love, and self stronger than Christ.

Because of this I could still doubt. *Aimer, c'est croire*, has been said by one of the great Catholics of France—faith and charity are one. It is of charity that Saint Paul says "it rejoices in the truth." It follows that hate rejoices in error. One who is evil is always exposed to falling back into lies, into the spell of delusion.

And delusion, Maja, came dancing towards me again and again. One day in October I wrote verses in this strain:

> Thought and faith have turned to dust and clay,
> But sun-glints are to gold wet straws refining;
> The sky is blue and vaulted, clear and bright the day,
> Amongst the leaves the apples red are shining.
>
> Still of the poet's purest joys to sing
> The ardour of my youthful blood is burning,
> Alas, I often yet must feel temptations sting,
> To earlier paths my feet returning.

Before me dances in the golden beams
A slender nymph, alluring me with looks divine,
Like fire all the foliage flashes.

My troubled heart tells me of dreams,
Of embers glowing under ashes,
And that I would the world were mine.

I could apply the words of William Morris about Ogier the Dane to myself:

as yet he had
a worldly heart within his frame made new,
and to the deeds that he was wont to do
did his desires still turn.

But I also knew that to me the Church could say what Morgan le Fay in the poem says to Ogier:

those troublous days are dead;
thou wert dead with them also, but for me.

Yes, indeed, I should have been dead amongst the dead days if a strong hand from above had not saved me. It was in the small garden in front of the house that I read the English poet's lines and felt that they were speaking of me—*de me fabula.* Near the wall of the house, where the September sun was still warm, and the tall sunflowers stood like flaming torches, stood my little daughter's wicker carriage. I heard a sound from it, I saw her moving her little dimpled arms in the sunshine and I understood that here was life, here was truth, health, reality—not the spicy dishes of a festal banquet, not the fermented beverages of romanticism, but the simple, nourishing bread of every day, the daily bread of life, and the consecrated, unleavened holy bread on the Altar of Sacrifice of the Church.

DE PROFUNDIS

"I shall not die, but live : and shall declare the works of the Lord. The Lord chastising hath chastised me : but he hath not delivered me over to death."—Ps. CXVII, 17, 18.

"Das sind kurze Stunden, in diesen hat Gott manche Seele, fast verloren, heimlich gefunden. Ich fand nicht, dass es je einem Menschen geschehe er hätte denn etwelches Gutes mit reinem Willen vollbracht."[1]

—MECHTILDE OF MAGDEBURG.

I

IN 1899 I was awarded the Anker Bequest,[2] for travelling. The amount bestowed then was only half as large as now and pledged the recipient to stay away from Denmark for six months. Carl Ewald later allowed James Singleton to solve the problem by spending half of this time in the Free Harbour of Copenhagen. For some of us this compulsory journey abroad, for which the means were far from sufficient, was the cause of an ensuing long period of being in debt.

Not that I was dissatisfied with having received the bequest—far from it! It was a matter of course that I

[1] There are brief moments in which God has found in secret many souls that were nearly lost. I have not found that it ever happened to any one had he achieved some good deed with a pure will.

[2] Anker. Carl Andreas (1828-1857). Spent his early years in farming the land on his own property, but on his father's death inherited a considerable fortune which enabled him to follow his inclination and devote all his time and energy to his great interest in art. Anker has left himself a lasting memory in Denmark by his bequest of a fund amounting to close upon £10,000, the interest of which was to be allotted in four yearly travelling stipends respectively to a painter, a sculptor, a writer and a musician.

would go to Assisi again, this time accompanied by my wife and children. In January of the same year Mogens Ballin had married the eldest Miss d'Auchamp, the good and gentle Marguerite, and the marriage was solemnized by none less than Padre Felice, who came from Italy to Copenhagen for the occasion and stayed a month with the Ballins. In the private chapel at "Mariabo" he received my wife and myself into the Third Order of Saint Francis and on leaving Denmark on Ash Wednesday he pledged us to meet him again in Assisi.

Before we left the country I paid a farewell visit to Svendborg. It was about midsummer and my uncle, Jörgen Johansen, was celebrating his twenty-five years' jubilee as master at the secondary school. As the house in Our Lady's Lane was full of other guests I went out in the evening to my uncle from Slipshavn, who had now retired from his activities as a pilot and had rented a villa on one of the hills above Svendborg. That form of Providence, usually called "chance," the intentions of which are as unfathomable as its whims are surprising, had now determined that the house which my uncle and aunt had taken should be one that was full of associations for me. In the summer of 1886, the summer of the Socialist procession, when the Red Star was in the zenith of my heavens, I had come to this house with my sisters. The friend about whom my sister had written in her letter to me,[1] the same with whom she had been out one morning at half-past five in early summer to gather flowers for me at Kristiansminde, had lived in this house. "The lilies-of-the-valley are from Bertha's garden"—from that garden in which my uncle was now going about in slippers and blue shirt-sleeves and cutting his roses—I even knew the roses—we had so often picked them, my sister and Bertha and I. There were *Marchéal Niel*, *Gloire de Dijon*, *la France*—moss-roses, tea-roses, *roses de Provence*. (Crimson ramblers had not yet come

[1] See Vol. 1, p. 88, *seq.*

into fashion then.) Throughout the holidays we three had been inseparable wayfarers on the roads up above the Svendborg hills, out to the haze-blue woods along the horizon, to Big Garden, Thief's Corner, the Haunted Wood and the Outrider Hills. We had gathered large, juicy Spanish cherries in the gardens of peasants whom Bertha knew, and we would walk together in silence listening only to the swishing of the rye-grass against our shoes as we went through a field. Then a day of parting had come, when Bertha had worn her pink gown with the black ribbons, and she and I had sat together on the seat by the flagstaff in the middle of the big lawn, each chewing a straw that was yellow and withered like the vanished summer, and we said nothing, only "good-bye and good luck" and I left.

Then came the reckoning with my parents, the great rupture, and I became a Bohemian, on whom a young girl living in a villa in Svendborg would not waste a thought.

To this house I was now led back again thirteen years after. In the evening, after I had said good-night to Uncle Herman and Aunt Amelia, I sat a long while at the open window of my room. It was the room in the gable which had once been Bertha's... I still remembered that a big sponge used to be hung out to dry in a net outside the window. It was the room of that time and there was a full moon. Out across the silent, harvested country the stubble fields shone like flat surfaces of gold. In the valley below lay Svendborg, its towers and roofs in a whitish haze; the waves of the Sound caught the light and moved in an unceasing shimmer; on the further shore rose the long, low line of Taasinge, dark against the moonlit air. A restless night-breeze, a mournful autumn wind sighed in the trees of the garden, down near the Sound flickered a solitary red light, as of one who was looking for something. I looked down on the garden of that time—the lawn, the flagstaff, even the

white garden seat was in the same place, all so pale and motionless in the moonlight. Below my window rustled the foliage of the fruit-trees growing against the wall, soughed, whispered, sighed. In the lonely harvest night an infinite sadness, a strange dread seized me. What had I dreamed of my future when last I left this garden? And now—what was now awaiting me? I thought of the journey—and I thought of death.

I had always thought a great deal about death. At the age of twenty I had written verses which, when they appeared in print, had caused general merriment, but were grim earnest to me:

> I dream of Death when Dawn
> sets forth upon her wanderings, purple-shod.
> I dream of Death when in the heat of noon
> my path leads o'er the desert wastes.
> I dream of Death when all the clamour of the day
> falls silent in the soothing calm of night.
> Upon the spinal column's slender stem
> quiver the thought-engendering leaves
> of the flowers of my brain.

And now, lately, Death had sent me message after message. The passing away of Paul Verlaine (Jan. 9th, 1896), had made a deep impression upon me; he had been an example to me and had led the way for me in life—was I not to follow him too, in death? I thought of him and of myself as I wrote the closing lines in my *De profundis* over him:

> Nothing now is left for me
> But a prayer from deep to deep,
> Lord, this stricken soul do Thou lead home
> The vision blest vouchsafe to him.
> *Pie Jesu, Domine,*
> *Dona ei requiem.*

Then, in Svendborg, the second in age of my sisters had died, gentle, fair-haired, blue-eyed Elisabeth. On the morning of Ascension Day she fell asleep, only twenty-three years old, after only a few days' severe illness. "Sister Grethe," she had said to the deaconess who nursed her, "must I really die? I am so young." "Darling little Elisabeth," the nurse had answered, and could not speak. "Then I am quite ready," said Elisabeth, "since it is God's will." And one morning, the morning of Ascension Day, she closed her beautiful dark-blue eyes and only opened them again in heaven, before the Lord whom she loved, and in whom she believed.

Death had come to her so quickly that I did not reach Svendborg until she was already laid in her coffin, which had been taken out to the chapel in the cemetery and could not be opened any more. Pastor Bast had come over from Vejle, but the burial service was conducted by Einar Prip, once my schoolfellow, later a missionary in Syria. I remember some impressive words of his on that occasion, this confession: "If Christ has not spoken the truth, if He be not what He claimed to be: the Son of God and my Redeemer—then it would have been better for me if I had not been born!" A little bird was singing as the coffin was borne away under the light linden trees. For the first time in my life I saw one of my dear ones vanish into the grave, the last flower disappears behind the soil that has been thrown up; the silence is deep as the creaking ropes are drawn up, and the priest says the Lord's Prayer to a God who seems to be so far, far away in the blue heavens.

Two years later I buried my own son. He was the second of our sons, born one Christmas morning, just as they were singing in church the third of the three Masses of the Nativity, *Missa in aurora*, the Mass of the Dawn, that which begins with the old words: "To us a child is born, to us a son is given. His name shall be

called Wonderful, mighty God, the Father of the world to come, the Prince of Peace." We too could sing: *Puer natus est nobis*, and we called our Christmas child Immanuel—Bengt[1] Immanuel.

Six months only were we permitted to keep Bengt. One midsummer day in the following year he passed away, one of the last days in a cold and rainy June, the last day but one, the feast of Saint Peter and Saint Paul. But when the thin lips of his pale little mouth at last ceased to move, stayed apart like a door left open by one who has gone out never to return, then at last the summer came (the summer he had needed so sorely to help him to recover), and in the cemetery the sun shone on the grass which had grown so tall and abundant because of the incessant rain. We chose the place for his grave in the loneliest corner, where grass and green lady's mantle grew in great profusion. There he was lowered into the ground (only the parish priest and two or three friends were present) and we went back to our flat which now seemed so empty to us and far too big, and where we still involuntarily opened and shut the doors as quietly as we could. In the nursery stood the empty cradle, on the medicine table cups and bottles, a glass with a spoon in it, a half-used tin of Nestlé's Food, in the flat wicker basket for his clothes lay his little blue jacket, linen and woollen garments, all those things which he no longer needed. "Now we can sleep," my wife said wearily, "nobody will disturb us any longer." But my little daughter, who was already a big girl of two, and who was of course called Tulle,[2] went up to the cradle, to the edge of which she could just reach up and called "Bengt!" "Bengt is not there," explained her brother, who was six years old and who had been to the cemetery. "Bengt is buried! Bengt is lying in a coffin

[1] A contraction of Benedict. Tr.

[2] In two syllables, the u pronounced as in *pull*. See footnote, Vol. 1, p. 77. Tr.

down in the ground." The little one pondered this. "Mummy," she said, and ran to her mother's knee. "Mummy dear, I want my boots on and then I will go and fetch Bengt. He must not stay in the black ground. He can crawl up quite well when Tulle holds him by the hand. Bengt must not stay in the cemetery. I will go out and catch him for you, Mummy! I will get him for you, Mummy darling!"

Tulle never caught Bengt. A stone was put over his grave and a seat placed beside it, and every evening all through the summer we went out to the cemetery. Out to Valby High Street, across the new bridge over the railway and past the large Protestant cemetery down to the small Catholic God's Acre with the crucifix in the midst. From the adjoining Jewish cemetery could be heard the singing of a blackbird or the calling of a belated cuckoo, and in an open field near by a lay preacher often held a meeting. His words did not reach to us who were sitting by the grave, but after his sermon there was singing, and one evening they sang "The sweetest rose." We had come out with plants in pots that we wanted to set in the grave and we had found everything that we had planted the evening before pulled up and destroyed by an invisible hand. "It is a mole," the grave-digger explained to us, "and" he added carefully, "it generally keeps—near the new graves." Ah, that mole, which assuredly had been sent by Satan himself, that mole which turned up everything that we thought we could catch and destroy. We dug up and turned over everything and disagreed and told each other truths, and forgot that down there in the ground, only a few feet lower down, lay our Christmas child, with a fine silk handkerchief over the pale, cold little face, and the closed eyelids which were so thin at last that they were blue. We forgot our Christmas child and that the name we had given him meant Prince of Peace; we quarrelled over his dead body and sat weary and silent

and angry on the bench. Then it was that the singing began, the plaintive, mournful hymn about "the sweetest rose."[1] Ah, had not *we* too seen it growing up amongst the spikiest thorns? Had not strife ruled over his cradle, harsh words and hard looks flashed like sword glints across it? The rose had withered, there remained only two souls like thistles and a dreary and desolate world. Was it so? Was it never to be different? "We lost the Christmas gift which God had given us because we did not deserve to keep it!" Then floating over our broken hearts came the sweet and soothing notes of the hymn, as if it would sing us home to the kingdom of heaven:

Ah, seek ye the places lowly,
Weep at the feet of the Saviour,
Ye shall find there the Child so holy,
For roses grow in the valleys.
Let the world take away all I cherish,
Let the thorns prick, let them tear me,
Let my heart faint, nay, let it perish
My rose I will never relinquish.

II

"Last day in Denmark. Last walk to the cemetery. I sit alone in the quiet, green corner by the little grave. It is afternoon, sunny and calm. Periwinkle is flowering on the grave, privet in the hedge; outside the grass

[1] A hymn dear and familiar to all Danes. Written by the Danish hymn-writer, Brorson.

Brorson. Hans Adolf (1694-1764). Hymn writer. Was a Lutheran minister in Jutland, where he succeeded to the living held by his father and grandfather before him. The hymn from which the verse above is taken is a favourite one amongst Danes because of its sweetness and tenderness, also perhaps, because of its use of familiar symbols, such as the rose, and the thorns and thistles of the wayside. Brorson is distinguished among other Danish hymn writers for his great depth of feeling and his pondering of the transforming power of the Cross over the soul.

has been cut for the second time and is full of low, yellow melilot. Near the Crucifix a grave is being dug, I hear voices, see the grave-digger hobbling about, hear him laugh, a hushed laugh because of the dead. Flies are buzzing close past me, a bird is twittering from the Jewish cemetery, and beneath it all there is an undertone of quiet soughing, the whispering of the trees, the humming of insects, the booming sound of the town far away. Two white butterflies flutter across the grave, with that peculiar, hesitating flight—the flight of the butterflies of my first youth in the garden at home. I feel as if a cycle of life had been completed, a wreath bound—like the wreaths and chains of dandelion stalks that we made as children in the meadows when it was radiant June and the green meadow was full of large, shining golden flowers. Now it is autumn, the swallows are gathering in great companies and preparing to go away. The clouds are reddening towards evening" (Aug. 28).

The next day, the commemoration of the Beheading of John the Baptist, we left Denmark. We were: my wife and myself, my eldest son, Tulle, her new little brother Knud and his nurse. A large caravan, with no other provision than the eighteen hundred Kroner of the worthy Anker.

In Berlin we stayed at the Catholic Hotel Krebs in Niederwallstrasse and took our meals in Friedrichstrasse, "Zum Franciskaner." The meals were cheap in this old-German and homely restaurant, and there were children's dinners at one mark, we grown-up folk paying only fifty pfennig more. The beer was excellent, the wine was Niersteiner. The waiting was done, not by South German women, but by pleasant middle-aged waiters who had children of their own and therefore took an interest in ours. It was here that Tulle showed that she was ahead of her years by speaking her first German at the age of only three years. She wanted something more

to drink and the water-bottle was empty. We therefore sent her to the buffet, after telling her what to say, and soon after heard her little voice saying loudly and distinctly the foreign words, *Bitte, ein Glas Wasser*!

On September 1st we went on to Nuremberg. It was my route of five years ago that I now repeated. "Again I see green, smiling Bavaria and all its churches and the crosses at the roadsides." Again I visited *Germanisches Museum;* I saw again Hans Pleydenwurff's, Burgmeyer's, Schäuffelein's and Wohlgemuth's saints and Madonnas. From the Museum we went to Lorenzkirche and Sebalduskirche, climbed up to the castle and sat outside 'Bratwurstglöcklein,' and drank Tucher ale.

We arrived in Munich on September 5th, and there we spent most of our time in the Schack Gallery and the *Alte Pinakothek*. My wife shared my interest in the art of painting, shared my particular predilection for early art. Together with her I noted down the following impressions:

"*Alte Pinakothek*. A Resurrection by Wohlgemuth. Christ stands solemnly beside the open grave, His right hand raised in benediction. On the stone that has been turned aside there is an angel, white, with violet shadows, occupied in folding up the shroud. The three holy women come in through the gate in the wall of the garden. In the background a ravine between rocks with a castle on the top at one side. At the end of the ravine one sees behind spires, above domes, the golden-rosy dawn of Easter Day.

"Pleydenwurff. Madonna with the Child, with whom a kneeling woman is playing. It is in a longish room with a niche, a shelf on the wall, a hanging cupboard. A bench beneath the window with a table before it, on the table a cup and plate. Through the window a view over a river, town and castle.

"Roger van der Weyden. Saint Luke kneeling, painting Mary and Jesus. The fine, noble, dignified, eccle-

siastical head of the Evangelist. In the background a blue river between banks with houses and trees.

"Perugino. Madonna appearing to Saint Bernard. In a cool, arched hall Saint Bernard sits at a reading desk, clothed in a white habit, which falls in smooth folds. The hands are raised, the head, small and delicate, brown-hued, beardless, short-haired. Before him stands Mary in a red robe and blue cloak. Behind her two angels, all three having wonderfully fine, thoughtful-looking heads, and mild, gentle eyes (Mary's are downcast). One looks out through a porch at a landscape with delicate domes of trees and blue mountains. Behind San Bernardo—his white habit is faintly yellow—stand two saints, a man and a woman, with the same type of delicate angel-face.

"Francia's adoring Madonna in a green meadow surrounded by a small hedge of roses. Birds are singing in the hedge, which is thin and neatly trellised.

"Filippo Lippi. The Annunciation. Madonna slender and calm, standing up, in a blue cloak, with a very young and serious face. 'Be it unto me!' Rich background of courtyard and garden."

From Munich to Innsbruck, where we again stopped a couple of days. Guided by an old edition of Baedeker, we chose the hotel Zum Mondschein. Its situation was beautiful, by the river Inn, with a view over the town and the wooded mountains, but the house was dilapidated and as comfortless as any inn in Spessart. When we came into the room that had been selected for us and one of us placed a portmanteau on the sofa, that piece of furniture gently stretched out all its four legs and lay down like a cow in a clover field. My wife turned as white as a sheet—"Nobody ever lives here," she exclaimed. The night was dreadful; drunken peasants who had spent the evening in the bar parlour mistook the doors and wanted to come in, forcing the door so that the frame creaked and we in our terror

barricaded ourselves with the wardrobe. At the same time a terrific thunderstorm broke out; through the slats of the shutters we saw the blue lightning flash over the foaming river, and along the waterside the deserted street on which the rain was pouring in torrents. From a leaky scupper on the roof the rain splashed in whirling streams upon our balcony. The river roared—my wife was distracted, miserable and angry, the baby cried and his nurse wanted to go home to Denmark. Tulle alone remained undisturbed and when she could make herself heard she remarked, as she looked up at a bad oil-print above the chest of drawers: "The Jesus Child is here—then it does not matter so much, does it?"

The next morning we moved to another and a better hotel. After the storm came a beautiful September day. We sat in the sunshine on our balcony, watched the clouds drifting slowly up over the green hills, heard the cow-bells tinkling on the pastures up above and all the bells of Innsbruck ringing for the feast of Our Lady. But on the following morning the rain was again pouring and we decided to leave that streaming town. On the day we left I was up early. "In the rain I passed the chapel of the Ursulines and heard a woman's clear voice from within singing *Veni, Creator Spiritus*. I went in—a Sister was being clothed. In front of the altar stood a priest in a pluvial, assisted by a deacon. The postulant was kneeling before him. The church was full of people, at the corners of the pews stood wet umbrellas from which little streams ran along the paved floor. I saw the postulant rise and again kneel down before the latticed door leading from the chancel into the convent. The priest prayed over her—then she stood up and went in—and from inside she sang a *Magnificat* so exulting in its joy that it made me weep. Then the nuns' voices could be heard behind the lattice singing: *Confirma, hoc, Deus, quod operatus es in nobis*, and the response: *a templo sancto tuo quod est in Jerusalem*. The priest turned

to the altar and intoned a *Te Deum*, which the new nun sang to the end in her young, clear and ringing voice" (Sept. 9).

On Sunday, September 10th, we travelled over the Brenner Pass; on the way I recognised a place deep down in a green valley, a lonely little church, standing in the middle of a walled cemetery without any graves. We arrived in Bozen just as loud bells were ringing for Benediction and the last rays of the sun were glowing in purple and violet on the Dolomites. The next day we ran into Italy. "Along the Adige. Heavy clusters of grapes everywhere. Trento. Meeting again with Italian church towers and old, faded roofs with pantiles," says the diary. "In Ala the first Italian: *Non si potrebbe mettere una corda?* and the first big soldi, which one does not put into one's purse, but keeps loose in one's trouser pocket." "In Verona no room in the *Albergo dell' Accademia;* we are shown to the *Aquila Nera*. A beautiful courtyard with flagged paths round it and a view over Italian roofs, walls, balconies and a great expanse of calm blue sky. Comfortable dining-room, but the food uneatable, especially for the nurse and the children. High prices. We move to the *Regina d'Ungheria*" (Sept. 11).

"High prices. Ah, Anker, it was not your fault that we found the prices high; your bequest was calculated to meet the needs of care-free young fellows of twenty, not of fathers of a family ten years older. But how this journey was poisoned for us by our constant fear of spending too much! Ah, to see once again those romantic façades, and the fine yellow stone of which those old churches are built: Duomo Santa Anastasia, San Fermo, San Zeno!" But how could you enjoy art with an easy mind when you reproached yourself, or reproached each other, if one of you had given a soldo too much to a beggar

We saw Verona, however, as well as we could. "In

the afternoon to Santa Maria in Organo—Gothic, with a Renaissance porch and Renaissance interior—San Giorgio in Braida, San Stefano, Sant' Eufemia (Gothic, modernised inside), San Lorenzo (Romanesque, with strong, heavy arches of red brick alternating with rough-hewn irregular stones), Santi Apostoli (double, Romanesque chiostro adjoining), also a very old church, half underground, dedicated to the two saints, Teutoria and Tusca, whose relics repose in an antique sarcophagus above the altar" (Sept. 13).

On the evening of September 14th we arrived at Firenze. We put up at *Casa Nardini* in the cathedral square and I remember my wife's delight when we stepped out next morning through the narrow glass door of the modest hotel, and she saw for the first time the Baptistry and the marble façade of the Duomo in the clear sunshine of a September morning. In other ways our sojourn on the banks of the Arno was not a very happy one. For the sake of economy we moved from *Casa Nardini* to *Borgo Ognissanti*, where we obtained a couple of rooms in the house of a widow. We did our own housekeeping here and after a time managed to live on ten lira per day, including everything, rooms, light, food, milk, and spirit for our little spirit stove. *Borgo Ognissanti* is not one of the healthiest streets in Firenze, however, particularly not in September, when the mosquitoes swarm up from the Arno. The children caught fever, my wife grew ill, and the nurse could not eat "that silly Italian food." "Firenze, thou fairest city in the world," I quoted ironically against myself, when I went out on a shopping expedition in the evening, from the milk-man to the provision dealer, from the baker to the chemist. This was another story and not like sitting on the hill at Fiesole and day-dreaming over a glass of liqueur. And my Italian, which was chiefly literary, was not of much use for shopping purposes.

We stayed a fortnight in Firenze and between attacks of illness we saw all we could manage to see. We climbed up to San Miniato and knelt before the Crucifix which had bent its head in approval to Saint John Gualbertus when one Good Friday he held out his hand in forgiveness to the murderer of his brother. We went to Fiesole and walked through the beautiful mountain woods towards Settignano—woods of oak and acacia, of cactus, of cypresses, and in the grass cyclamen and spicy, scented mint. In the evening we saw the swallows wheeling high up above the cypresses—as they did above the long row of tall poplars in the Western Cemetery in Copenhagen when we sat on the bench beside Bengt's grave. We went to the Cascine with the children, sat on a seat and watched them playing with the gravel and gathering the first yellow leaves. We visited all the places visited by conscientious art tourists—the Uffizi and Pitti, Or San Michele, Badia and Bargello, Santa Maria Novella and Santa Croce, Ognissanti, Santa Trinità, Carmine, San Lorenzo, San Marco, Santissima Annunziata, Ospedale degli Innocenti, Accademia. I continued making notes of my impressions, but will only (and only as a document) insert here the following strange sentence passed on the art of the Renaissance: "*Palazzo Pitti: 'Le diballage de luxure de la Renaissance'* (Bloy). In Raphael's portrait of Leo X a cardinal whose face greatly exonerates Luther—Titian's Maddalena, a wanton—Veronese's portrait of his wife: a huge, fat woman with transparent lace over several square miles of flabby bosom. Above this a pearl necklace and a fat face with a double chin, small snubby nose between big cheeks and extraordinary hair in small, newly-dressed curls on the forehead. Eyes brown, sharp, smile full of self-complacency. O pride of the flesh! O Renaissance! Titian's disgusting *Sposalizio di Santa Caterina.* A dressed up young hussy hysterically embracing a child which is lying in the lap of a lady who seems rather indifferent

about it. Saint Joseph looks on resignedly; an idiotic boy, supposed to represent John the Baptist, stares at them open-mouthed. Andrea del Sarto's 'Annunciation'—Mary looks as if she had been frightened by a wasp; 'Good gracious, no!' she exclaims" (Sept. 28).

With predilection I looked up small, out-of-the-way churches—Santi Apostoli, where I sketched and described the della Robbia tabernacle; San Stefano, where Boccaccio once gave his lectures on Dante's *Divina Commedia*, and where I pondered over old epitaphs in the little white-washed convent courtyard, which on this day in late September was damp and deserted. For instance, this one: "*Joannes Henricus Antonius Schermar ex Ulmo qui anno aetatis sui quarto et vigesimo IX cal. sept. MDLXXXIIII anni obiit hoc marmore tegitur.*" I saw him before me, that young man from beyond the Alps, Johann Heinrich Anton Schermar of Ulm. The plague in Firenze had carried him off one day in August, 1584. He had died, only twenty-four years old—"now he is covered by this marble."

We decided to leave Firenze. I had written to Padre Felice at Assisi and he had answered that my old friend and landlady, Filomena, was expecting us and that her house was ready to receive us.

On the last evening in Borgo Ognissanti I stood alone at a window and looked down into the little garden behind the house and out across Firenze. It was eleven o'clock, it was moonlight. Directly opposite there was a dead white wall with closed green shutters. I saw the lustrous marble gable on Santa Maria Novella, its slender tower and pointed spire, the dull red dome of the Cathedral; I glimpsed afar the hill at Fiesole in a moonlit haze, and Fiesole's campanile. Down the sky I saw the familiar stars, Capella, Cassiopeia, the Pleiades, Aldebaran low down above the roofs. Dew fell now and then in heavy drops, bells tolled softly in the distance, here and there shutters were being closed. And

I thought of the moonlight in August over the harvested fields of Svendborg—of the past and the present, of the future, of death—of the grave in the courtyard of San Stefano's convent, upon which the moon was shining now: "this marble covers him."

III

"It is nine o'clock in the evening. Beneath our windows Assisi sleeps in a silence full of sounds, its roofs pale in the moonlight. The country too, is quiet, save for the sound of a cart far out on a hard road. Down the middle of the moon-grey plain runs the moon-white road to Santa Maria degli Ángeli; the dry river-bed of the Tescio is bright; yonder on the other side a solitary red light is lit in Bettona; far away is the brilliant light of the powerful electric lamps in Perugia. I feel that I am at home—in my ideal home country" (The diary, November 12).

Yes, I was in Assisi again—I was again at home, more at home than anywhere except in Svendborg. We had come up by carriage to Assisi from the station, just as the bells of San Francesco, on the evening of October 3rd, were ringing in the feast of Saint Francis. Again I saw on the hill the wonderful Sagro Convento, which looks as if it had been carved out of old ivory, and Assisi like a ribbon of blush rose above Monte Subiaso, violet in the evening glow. Our carriage drove up the Via Principe di Napoli, which was "wonderfully old and quiet," and in which I met and recognised the Sisters of *Il Giglio*, taking their pupils to evensong in San Francesco. Then we stopped outside Filomena's house, outside the green door at which Mogens and I had so often gone in and out, and Filomena appeared, wrinkled, touched and smiling, found the children "*carini*"—"but most so the youngest, because Padre Felice had baptised him when he was in *Danimarca*"—

and confided to me that my wife was *una bella e degna persona*. A festive supper table awaited us and I recognised two slender decanters which our hostess only brought out on great occasions; there was one at each end of the table, filled with ruby red wine. After supper my wife and I went down to the church where Benediction was just over and the candles on the bright altar still burning like a huge constellation in a cloud of incense. We went down to the tomb of San Francesco and Padre Felice came and spoke to us, welcoming us to Assisi. Then we went for an evening walk outside Porta San Giacomo along the road to the cemetery—"darkness, stillness, here and there a *chiara bella* glowing in the grass, deep down in the valley scattered lights; singing out in the fields." In the evening we stood on the balcony outside our rooms—"far away the lights of Perugia, as I saw them five years ago from La Rocca. In the small monastery of the Friars of Saint Anthony, next door, the monks' voices could be heard reciting the Latin night prayers. I heard a single voice saying *Domine exaudi orationem meam* and the choir answering *Et clamor meus ad te veniat*. And again I was seized by the wonderful atmosphere of religion in this town" (The diary, Oct. 3).

We occupied the rooms which had once been Mogens Ballin's—a dining-room in the middle, on the right a bedroom for my wife and myself, on the left two bedrooms for the nurse and the children. The furniture consisted of the same substantial things, all still standing as it had stood in the time of Signor Francesco. I saw again the broad prie-dieu which Mogens had had beside his bed. I now made use of it myself. Above it I wrote on the white-washed wall, in neat lettering such as I had once used at La Rocca, the blessing of Saint Francis of Assisi: "May the Lord bless thee, thou holy city which art faithful to God, for through thee shall many souls be saved, and in thee shall dwell many of the

servants of the Highest, and from thee shall many be taken up into the everlasting fatherland."

De te multi eligentur ad regnum aeternum ! This prophecy had nearly been fulfilled for Mogens. In this very room in which I was now sleeping, he had been sick unto death, here he had received the last sacraments—and had been spared at the last moment "by the prayer of faith," as Saint James says.

Here I was, then, and after the idleness of travelling I was again to begin work. I had handed over the editorship of *The Catholic* to Niels Hansen, a convert Lutheran minister, now qualified as a teacher of languages, and helped him to fill the weekly eight pages by sending home articles, as well as the beginning of my translation of *The Little Flowers of Saint Francis*. This would have been very well if my powers had not suffered under strong doubts that surged up in me—doubts of myself, of my right, of my righteousness. . . . Since *The Truth and Falsehood of Life* (February, 1896), I had been a mighty controversialist—but had it been in God's cause ? With *Foes of Hell* I had plunged into a new and still more violent strife. To those whom I called *foes of hell* I had applied Baudelaire's stinging words about George Sand : "*She* had good reason to wish hell out of the way !" Was Baudelaire, was I, so sure of heaven that we could dare to utter such foolhardy words ? Or rather : Was not he who found it a joy to shoot with such poisoned arrows, much more predestined to that kingdom in which all are experts in hate ? I had felt embittered when I read in an article in *Köbenhavn*,[1] Henning Jensen's[2] words in defence of my old friend Böving, whose work, *The Animals of our Planet*, I had attacked. "Altogether" (he said), "J. J. writes only in order to attack. He has got such Christian gentleness into his blood that he *must* vent his wrath on one or another. No one has seen so much

[1] A Copenhagen daily paper.

[2] A Lutheran minister who had become a free-thinker. Tr.

as one kind, conciliating word from the hand of this pious soul." In vain had Niels Hansen tried to hold up an excusing shield in front of me, and retorted that Henning Jensen too had changed his convictions, but in the opposite direction. In my inmost heart, the very inmost depths, where truth sits in judgment and the sentences passed are as irrevocable as reality itself, I had to confess: "My opponent is right." That which Henning Jensen wrote of me was true—I had no charity. And without charity no one enters into the kingdom of heaven. "If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or as a tinkling cymbal." When *Beuron* came out a critic, who in other respects was hostile, wrote: "But J. J. has taken his golden pen with him into the cloister." My christening gift had not been taken from me, I could speak with the 'tongues of angels,' as I had before spoken with the tongues of men. My words rang like consecrated bronze as they had before rung like the melancholy tinkling of the bells of a French decadent Pierrot. But still I had not charity—I was therefore, in the words of the Apostle, "nothing." And nothing is the opposite of *Being*, of God. Nothing is death, it is everlasting death.

I felt this more and more as day succeeded day. To a friend in Holland, the architect Jan Stuyt, to whom I had been introduced by a Dutch priest in Copenhagen, I wrote: "I do not know whether you are a man of prayer. But if you are, pray for me as one prays for the souls in torment."

One thing more I understood, or if I did not understand it, it was made clear to me. Not only in public, but in my private life was I without charity. "A long reckoning with my wife," says the diary. "It is *I* who have been in the wrong. It is I, the arrogant and false Christian, who have taken her reasonable remarks and objections as unfounded reproaches. I have been very

petty and believed myself very great; very *cruel* and thought I was very kind; very crabbed and thought I was suffering in a Christian spirit. I have not had charity because I have not had true faith. I humble myself before my wife and feel faith and charity being born again in my hard, falsely pious heart" (Oct. 6).

This is not an evanescent mood, it is a feeling that endures. "Of myself to be rejected, only through God to be tolerated and accepted. I feel this strongly at the present time," says the diary of Oct. 11th. On October 18th I note the following *results:* "Not a sentimentalist but a man. Not a reactionary but a friend of progress. Not 'the Catholic' but simply a Catholic. Not first of all religious and then a poet (which is only lazy egoism), but first a poet, and poetry, like life, sustained by religion."

These lines are written in pencil; I was suffering from some illness, the nature of which was at present undecided. I had a slight temperature, but good Dr. Tini who attended me, did not think it was anything serious. The children were ill too—inflammation of the ear, inflammation of the kidneys—nor was my wife well. I thought so little of my illness that I got up at night to attend to her. One night, however, I could hardly find my way back to bed, I was so confused by fever, and soon my illness appeared to give grounds for some anxiety. My temperature rose, though my mind was still clear enough to allow me to make notes of my impressions. The diary, in its cover of black American cloth, lay amongst the medicine bottles on the table by the bed, and I was still able to fill some pages in it with a few shaky, pencilled notes:

"Feverish dreams. Threatening faces, which I also see with my eyes open. A gloomy court of law: Quesnay de Beaurepaire is speaking in an almost inaudible voice. Suddenly the faces of the advocates change—they turn into horrible ruffians who rush in upon me threateningly.

Instead of a hand, one of them has a lobster's claw, which he brandishes in front of me. Dark streets with people pursuing me. Down stairs into a workshop where the ceiling is as high up as in a church. The floor is littered with small yellow statuettes which hinder me in moving.

"But there are also beautiful scenes. Bright roads and singing—my own children playing—Tulle sitting far away in her white frock, at the end of a dark passage, but out in the sun. Most beautiful of all, a landscape in Norway, where a wonderful old carriage, grey and elaborately carved, is slowly moving on through the snow to the singing of 'Granny is going to chur - urch,' dying away far off amongst the mountains with a sound like *Kyrie eleison!*"

Some days and nights pass in this way. "Fourth night. Moonlight. Eerieness. Fever hallucinations of all kinds of creatures here in the room. An old woman stood picking her worm-eaten teeth. In the middle of the room a gigantic, coal-black horse, in the corner a gigantic, black monk, with a hat on. At the door I heard Francis Beckett[1] talk all the time about the history of art."

It was clear to me that my condition was serious and I asked my wife to send for Padre Felice, so that I could make my confession. He came, but could make nothing of my incoherent sentences and had to be content with giving me his blessing. Dr. Tini now declared that I had typhus ; the children and the nurse were moved upstairs to Filomena's daughter, who lived in the flat on the first floor ; a male nurse was sent for from the hospital to relieve my wife and old Filomena, who had hitherto looked after me. Again I wished to make my confession ; the nurse answered that it was the middle of the night, I would have to wait till the next morning. I then wanted to prepare myself in writing, and wrote down in the

[1] Beckett. Francis (b. 1868). Art critic and historian. Has made special studies of Florentine art.

diary the confession I intended to make. It was, however, only a series of rambling sentences. I can read the words, "*mea culpa*," and the date, October 20th, "evening before Mother's birthday." When Padre Felice came the next morning I was far away, in a world in which his voice could not reach me.

IV

Now there are some who will say that the visions related in the following are only fever hallucinations, like those in the foregoing. I will answer them with this question: Why do they say that they are *only* hallucinations, and do they know what hallucinations really are? As no one knows what anything really is—fever hallucinations as little as anything else—I pass over to the matter in hand and say what *my* opinion is. It is an opinion as good as that of anyone else, neither more nor less—take it for what it is.

For many years I have noticed what has been told about dying persons and I have observed that they often "came back," as it were, from another world. On his death-bed Leo XIII whispered to one of those who tended him: "I feel that I am already in the hands of the living God." And when Björnstjerne Björnson lay dying in the room of a hotel in Paris, he said one morning to his daughter: "Now I could write; yes, now I could write, for I have been in the kingdom of Death and in the lands on its borders" (*Politiken*, Dec. 8, 1910).

I am convinced that during my illness in Assisi I too was "in the kingdom of Death and in the lands on its borders." From the evening of October 20th till the morning of the 23rd I hovered between life and death. Dr. Tini called in another local physician; they did what they could. If I was not given the last sacraments, it was because Padre Felice was away during the

beginning of the crisis, and later I could not bear to be touched, but threatened to throw the water-bottle, the candlestick, etc., at those who came near my bed.

Immediately after my illness I tried to fix on paper the memories of what had happened to me during that time. I wrote down my impressions the first time on November 6th, when I had so far recovered strength that I could write; then again on December 19th, on January 24th, June 2nd, June 19th and June 26th, 1900, finally on March 9th, 1901.

The first thing that occurred on the evening of October 20th was that my relations with my wife became clear to me. We had a talk immediately before I lost consciousness and she placed all my guilt before me, all my wrong from the first day I had met her until I now lay dying in a foreign country. All my lyrical neglect of duty, all my selfish poet's disposition—all that which my conversion had remedied but little, because it was a conversion to hate rather than to love. I saw it all, saw it in the light coming from the gates of death opening before me, saw it and was filled with horror, swayed giddily on the brink of despair, gathered up my last remaining courage and prayed. As I prayed everything vanished about me—it seemed as if a mighty peal of thunder rolled over the house—and I was—where?

I felt that I was in the hands of inexorable *Order*. There was a law which had to be fulfilled and I could not escape it, could not even *wish* to escape it. My whole being was suddenly one burning desire—like a hunger or a thirst—for justice to be done. I craved but one thing: to be judged, regardless of the sentence that might be passed. It was as though I were being penetrated by the very Essence of God and that this Essence was holiness—irresistible holiness. All earthly talk about so-called "injustice" in God was silenced—His right was as evident as the very sun itself. Within me, about me and with me, began a series of processes bound

by law, which of necessity led either to salvation or perdition—and in both cases to a result to which no objection could be made. God *had to conquer* because He was the stronger, and God *ought to conquer* because He was in the right. He had *all* the right, His victory was absolute—so absolute that it was a foregone conclusion. Victory came of itself because it was the simple effect of truth. Everything happened in the most perfect, most silent, most exalted inevitability.

From the world of appearances I had passed over to that of truth. I had penetrated from the periphery into the centre and that which I found there is best defined as incarnate conscience. The new world in which I found myself *consisted*, as it were, of conscience. Here conscience was material, external, it had assumed bodily form and the form of its incarnation was *light*. I saw what seemed to be a system of wondrous paths of light, tracks of light and circles of light, and I saw super-terrestrial beings, angels or souls, moving freely in this light, gliding lightly along the golden or violet or crimson-purple radiant paths.

But *I* could not move in this world of light. I ran against the light, I stumbled in it, I could not go on because of it. It was as hard as stone and resisted me. There was such opposition between the light and myself that even the least movement was impossible—I could not stir hand or foot.

To this feeling of an ominous impotence was added another, still more ominous, of baseness of soul. For a moment I had the feeling that my wife had come over with me where I was now, and that she would come to my aid by pointing out my merits. This praise only added to my torment, I tried to stop her eulogies, which I found at the same time pathetic, ridiculous and dishonouring, and in particular, hopelessly futile. There was nothing to be done—I was a man of darkness—and this was the realm of light!

I was a man of darkness, and moreover, one of the most dangerous and harmful. And now I stood before the judgment-seat, before a council of the pure spirits of light, and felt in my despair how coarse and mean, how selfish and conceited I was, how fond of myself and how self-absorbed. I was called upon to come forward, my name was mentioned, the name which I had so often signed under virulent attacks or venomous malice, and I could not escape from it, I had to answer for every syllable, every jot that this name stood for. I felt that I hated this name, felt it to be a dishonour, a branding, to bear it. But I could not escape from it. I could not become Viggo Stuckenberg or Sophus Claussen, *I was I!*

It was terrible to be I. The spirits of light who had brought me up to judgment complained of the stench of my soul. They had continually to leave their hold of me and bathe themselves clean in fragrant streams of shining purple or golden light. I felt the stench myself—my soul seemed to me so loathsome that it could never become clean; I felt as if it were a lump of horrible putridness in the midst of pure light and almost perished of shame and hopeless loathing.

There I stood before the supreme court of existence, before the council of pure spirits, and judgment was passed. Not annihilation—that punishment would have been too slight! But everlasting compulsory toil in the deepest of all the subterranean caverns in which the spirits of light keep the children of darkness.

One more last attempt to escape from my name, to put the blame on someone else, to steal over to the side of light. All in vain—I stood frozen fast in the light, and as though chained by a strong electric current. Then, I know not how, I was in the place of torment.

It was deep, deep down in the ground. High up above me was Assisi—were the sunny plains of Umbria, was the land I loved and should never see any more. Round

about me were low caves, dark, slimy cellars, in which I was to dwell through all eternity. Here I had to toil, to make a path for hot sulphur springs, to regulate streams of lava, to tend the subterranean fire. For ever—for ever—this life was to last—for my only hope lay in the destruction of the world of light, the victory of darkness—and in spite of everything I could not wish for that.

Or did I wish it? If so, I quickly recalled my wish. For it was shown to me what the fall of light would mean. It was made possible to me to cause by treachery a terrific catastrophe in the world of light and to see the effect of my act. All those wondrously beautiful paths of light, bridges of light, arches of light, all that pure, great, exalted cosmos—with a roar it crashed into ruins! And I was the guilty one—I—I! Darkness had conquered, *we* had conquered! There was nothing left in existence except us men of darkness and our empty life of shadows—a pale and powerless imitation of the real life of the world of light. Filled with horror I saw the world of life burning up to a smaller and smaller glow—soon the last spark would be extinguished and in all eternity there would never be anything in existence but an abyss of darkness, full of shadows and fogs. With all my heart I wished that I could restore the ruined beauty, that I could develop a new harmony from that last spark of life and value which was glowing in the yawning abyss of void and darkness, and this agony was so great, this contrition and desire, that for a moment I returned to consciousness (as it is called). I saw the room about me, saw Dr. Tini stooping over me, heard outside the closed shutters of the window the night-wind tearing at the trees and the rustling of the leaves along the narrow lane beneath the windows. "It is the Last Day, Dr. Tini!" I said. (I was told afterwards that to the doctor, the nurse and Filomena I spoke Italian, to Padre Felice French, and Danish only

to my wife. At the same time, therefore, that I was away from the usual reality, I had a correct perception of it). "It is the wind you are hearing," the kindly young doctor answered. "The wind and the withered leaves." "No," I repeated, "it is the Last Day, it is the last great revolution!"

Then Dr. Tini vanished, and with him all the rest of the world about me, but the impression of the Last Day remained. I understood that in the hour of death everyone experiences not only his own, personal day of judgment, but also the judgment of humanity—the destruction of humanity—the destruction of the world—*Dies irae, dies illa* . . . .

I heard a mighty trumpet signal resounding over the earth—Satan marshalled his troops for the last fight—and I heard them come, the hosts of Satan. They advanced like a roaring torrent down the Umbrian plain, they poured in like a flood and hurled themselves upon the town, I heard their hard hoofs clattering through the streets of Assisi with a sound like herds of stags on the run—and wherever they came they set fire to the churches, crashed the doors of the convents into splinters and murdered the priests. I heard them shrieking and howling, a terrible song arose from their savage throats, from their blood-dripping lips. For they had drunk of the blood of the slain, and from their blood-stained mouths poured a savage yell of exultation: "We have quenched our thirst in the blood of Christian men!" They were all the cowed and oppressed, all the ragged and hungry, all those from the narrow lanes and dingy courts, all those whom one hurries past in the evening when one meets them under a street-lamp, and sees how sinister they look, and there is no policeman near. They were all those who had been ill and whose pain no one had soothed, all those who had been in prison and whom no one had visited, the naked to whom no one had given clothes, all those who had

hungered and thirsted and who now appeased their hunger with the Body of Christ, which they contemptuously tore out of the tabernacle and ate sacrilegiously, drinking with it the blood of priests and nuns out of consecrated chalices. They were all the disinherited and the hopeless, the tribe of Cain and the brethren of Judas Iscariot; and Lucifer, the great Disinherited and Hopeless One, the rebel from the beginning and the Judas amongst the angels had put himself at their head and led them now—whither? I listened—a new savage song gave me the answer—I heard its refrain: *La ronde, la ronde de Rome!* Why *la ronde de Rome?* Because Satan was now going to march against Rome, the throne of Christ was to be overturned, the Vice-Gerent of Christ was to be executed in the midst of the square before St. Peter's, the obelisk with the Cross was to be overthrown and its inscription made a lie: the Lion of the tribe of Judah had *not* conquered! And while the head of the last Pope fell under the guillotine, the Church of St. Peter was to be blown up and about its smoking ruins mankind, at last set free, was to dance and sing its hymn of rejoicing—*la ronde, la ronde de Rome*. . . .

Thus was the history of the world to end. Was not God the strongest then? Was it possible that His adversary could be victorious? Like a fiery flash and an icy shudder the answer pierced through me: "It *was* possible! Satan *could* conquer! God and Satan had fought against each other for thousands of years, but the issue was not yet decided. God *might be defeated!*"

But then I would have to come to His aid! I would have to go into battle! I tried to get out of my bed, I seized the tall brass candlestick from the table beside me and swung it like a javelin. Then I was disarmed and soothed to rest. *La ronde de Rome* grew faint in the distance. And there was a deep silence about me.

A silence so icy that it made my heart throb. It began to throb with great, heavy beats and I felt as if it were

driving me on, like the piston-rod of a steam-engine. I felt that I was moving, forward, upward—I floated—I ascended. . . .

I ascended, and round about me there were, as it seemed to me, circles of song, singing gently and sweetly into my ear. It was like the music of delectable violins and it was like my mother's voice when she sang to us children in the evening twilight about "The bright land of dreams," and now a voice asked me: "Would you reach it, that bright coast of dreams? It is yours if only you will, and there is your true home! You have loved all that was sweet and gentle, all that was cool and quiet—the dusk, moonlight, the white nights—all of it shall be yours for ever. Look, there is the coast of dreams on the horizon!"

Carried as though by infinitely careful hands, flying or floating, I glided into a quiet bay amongst newly-opened beech trees. The light-coloured May foliage hung down against the smooth water and a long way in amongst the trees of the spring woods white anemones caught the light. Dear figures stood on the shore, loved voices called to me; it was the rose-garden of my childhood to live in for ever, and I wept for joy.

"But what is *that* really to you?" the kind voice continued. "You are called to something far, far higher! Do not believe what those angels of light, disguised as spirits of darkness, tried to terrify you with just now, that you are wretched and common, coarse and mean. On the contrary, you are something very great, and your name, which but now filled you with horror, shall be glorified beyond all measure. Perhaps you will not believe me, but I can tell you that your name shall be written in the stars! God is only waiting for you to enter heaven to let it come to pass!"

There was a feeble protest in my soul and with becoming modesty I said, "It is not possible!" But the ascent towards the Highest was a fact, higher and higher

we rose, nearer and nearer did I come to the eternal Paradise. For a moment I felt a kind of fear of the blessed state, its overwhelming fulness and sweetness—could an earthly heart contain it? But this doubt vanished and I was filled with hope and confidence. "Do you want to be saved?" asked the voice of him who was carrying me. We were so near to heaven that I could already hear the singing of the blessed and see the light from the gates of the heavenly Jerusalem. "Is it your will to be saved?" the voice repeated. "Nothing but your will is needed. Acknowledge that you are a lost sinner, that you have no claim on salvation, but just this, that you are a sinner. Do you will to be saved by sheer grace, without any merit?" "Yes, Lord, I will."

At this moment I saw deep down beneath me San Francesco in Assisi. In the midst of the lower church stood a black catafalque with burning candles around it —I understood that Mass for the Dead was being sung over my dead body. The voice at my side continued: "Let the priests keep your body but give me your soul!" Then once more the question was put to me, "Do you will to be saved by sheer grace, without any merit, only because you are a poor sinner?" My whole heart rejoiced at the blissful message—salvation, then, was as easy as that! With all my heart I answered, "Yes, Lord, I will!" and prepared myself for entering into everlasting joy.

Then through all the heavens there was a mighty roll of thunder. The light went out, the singing ceased and I fell, fell, fell. The kind hands no longer sustained me, and in my ear whispered a voice which was no longer gentle and insinuating but harsh and contemptuous: "Oh indeed, my good friend! You thought you could swing straight into Paradise! Here on the earth you would never taste anything but milk and honey—everything bitter and severe repelled you. Now you thought, didn't you, that this state of things was to

continue through all eternity. Have you not read in your Bible (you study it so assiduously !) that salvation is for those who here on earth have crucified themselves and followed Christ ? You have *followed your self*—you have crucified Christ. And therefore your place is *here !"*

The voice ceased, the fall stopped, I had reached the bottom. I sat on a bench in a low, dark earth-cave (to this day I can still see that cave before me, it was just as real as anything I have seen in the world upon which the sun shines). There were no voices any more, neither good nor evil, but within me an infinitely crushing feeling of having been deceived, made a fool of—and that by my own fault. I had believed in the delectable singing, the sweetly flattering demons and their false messages of peace because I was worthy of nothing better. And now I was sitting here in the fore-court of hell and knew that my case was being tried. Not before a council of the spirits of light this time, but before the very God of truth and justice, before the Son of Man, Jesus, the Just One. I was up for judgment, nay, I was already judged. With terrible certainty I knew what the result would be, I felt that my being was so irretrievably bad, so hopelessly evil that I *must* needs be lost. Staring helplessly down into the brown dust on the floor of the cave I knew with unerring certainty that I was damned. I felt at the same time that my mother, my sisters, my children were to be saved—that my sister Elisabeth *was* saved—and that in their everlasting heaven they could not even feel any pity for me because their will had become one with the pure and holy will of God. "If only some one would pray for me in this hour," I craved. I listened, as it were, up to the earth above me. But no one was thinking of me there, no prayer descended to comfort me. And I could not pray myself—it was *too late*—.

"Yet I had prayed and been anxious to be good while

I was still living amongst men?" I tried to comfort myself a little with this thought, to extract a slight hope from it. I reviewed my short life as a Catholic, the three years and a half since my conversion, but I could not find much comfort there. Ought I not, after so many years of unbelief and sin, to have devoted my life far more earnestly to prayer and penitence? Instead of that I had arranged my life as pleasantly as I could, enjoyed the comforts of matrimony and dealt harshly and spitefully with old friends. There was no escape. Now as before the judgment seat of the spirits of light I felt so base that I nearly perished of self-loathing. And with this self I had now to exist through all eternity—I could *never* become different, *never* become better, purer, truer....

Then the gates of hell opened to admit me. The vast, black portals swung back and from within heat and flame rushed out upon me, and maniac shrieks and wild laughter. In the lurid gloom I saw dark, half-incinerated figures stretching out their arms to me and hailing me with scoffing shouts: "Why there is the Catholic! Welcome, welcome, to the home of the devil and all his angels!" With the terrible clearness of reality I saw that I was never again to see those dear to me, never again to meet a friendly face, a kind look, never more to meet any one good—from henceforth I was to live, evil myself amongst none but other evil souls, impure amongst none but other impure, full of hate amongst others as entirely full of hate—The separation was everlasting and my accursed state was everlasting....

Like a sword this agony pierced me through—I opened my eyes. It was evening—through the window I saw the sunset glowing in crimson over the mountains on the further side of the plain. I contemplated this sunset, the last, blissful, earthly sunset I was to behold before I descended into everlasting darkness. Why had God created me if it was only for this torment?

For a moment hate surged up in me—the despairing hate of the powerless towards an unjust tyrant. The words were already on my lips, the words in which hell solves the problem: "God, I *hate* Thee!" I wanted to utter the words, to curse the tyrant and walk with head erect into the everlasting fire. . . .

Then I became aware that my wife was sitting by my bed. She held my feverish hand, she moistened my parched lips. She discovered that I had regained consciousness and stooping over me, she asked: "How are you feeling?"

"I am dying!" I answered harshly, and heard her burst into tears. I wanted to add, just as curtly and harshly: "And I am damned."

But I could not utter the awful words. Instead I seized her hand and stroked it.

And it seemed as if a ray of love passed through me. One single little ray of compassionate love.

Then it was as if my whole being melted. All the crushing self-contempt, all the hardened hopelessness, the feeling of baseness and impurity retreated and was swept away by an inrushing stream of cleansing, consuming light. I felt that it was the Lord of Life who was coming to my aid; He who has promised that not even a cup of cold water given to a disciple shall go unrewarded. That tiny, almost imperceptible movement of love had been like a hand stretched out to the Lord of Love. And He had seized it . . . He had saved me on the brink of the abyss. In heartbroken thankfulness I cried His name in a loud voice . . . that Name which is above every name . . . repeated it again and again and each time felt more and more secure. Lights were brought into the darkening room . . . I saw the candles moving towards me as though in a procession. Some one came in—a figure bent over me, a solemn, fatherly, gentle, brotherly loving figure of a man. And Padre Felice's voice said, "Sleep now! All is well!"

Assisi, April-May, 1917.

CHRISTIAN DEMOCRACY

Nemo contra Deum nisi Deus ipse. Spinoza.
"*No one fights against God except God Himself.*"

On the evening of November 27th, 1899, I set foot in Rome for the first time. During my convalescence in Assisi I had prepared myself for it by studying Anton de Waal's handbook *Der Rompilger*, and under the guidance of that learned student of Roman antiquity I had wandered through the old basilicas and the catacombs. I came to Rome in order to kneel at the tombs of martyrs and retrace the footsteps of saints of the past and I found a large, modern city. "Straight, long streets, electric trams, big, modern shops, elegant cafés, and public buildings which look as if they had been imported direct from Berlin," are the lines in *Roman Mosaics*, the book in which I recorded my impressions of that first visit to Rome. "Having found your hotel," it continues, "you go out again. But you see the same kind of streets everywhere, the same trams, the same electric light. There are no churches of gleaming marble; no mighty *Palazzo Vecchio*—as in Florence—breaks the modern monotony of the straight rows of houses. At last you reach the Tiber, which, beneath the rays of the electric light, plunges ahead under a large iron bridge, over which the tram hurries along like a house on wheels. You lean against the granite parapet, you gaze across the river but you see nothing you could

not have seen across the Knippel Bridge[1] in Copenhagen, and with a heart full of disappointment you return to your room in the hotel, which on this November evening is cold and comfortless. Nevertheless, it is a strange thought that Leo XIII is sleeping in the same city as I. . . . . "

Leo XIII—not without cause did I think of him as I laid my head on a Roman pillow on that first evening. It was in the days of *Christian Democracy*, during the reign of "the working-man's Pope." In my little weekly paper, *The Catholic*, I had made myself the spokesman of this movement, which had grown great under the aegis of Pope Leo. The Encyclical of 1891 on the social question, *Rerum novarum* seemed to me and to many others a harbinger of a coming new era. It seemed to us, now that the nineteenth century was ebbing out and the twentieth setting in—a new century, dedicated to the Sacred Heart—as if this new century was to bring the great miracle for which we hoped. We believed that the Vice-Gerent of Christ would now leave his castle, come down from his throne, go out amongst the step-children of the social community into the dingy ill-smelling courts and alleys of the poor quarters, gather all the ill-used and oppressed under his white cloak and say to them: "Your need is my grief, your suffering makes my heart ache. Come, I will speak in your cause so that the whole world shall listen! I will lead you out of darkness and filth and miserable indigence to sunshine and health and a life worthy of human beings. Your wives shall no longer stand dirty and half-dressed quarrelling underneath the rags hung out to dry across the alley: no more shall your daughters hunt men beneath the electric lamps on the boulevards; your boys and youths shall no longer be devoured by the poison which is poured out to them over the zinc slab of the bar at the corner: your children shall no more

[1] See Vol. 1, p. 47.

lie like a filthy heap of spawn sleeping under rags, with their hair full of vermin! Behold, I will lead you out of it all, as Moses led the children of Israel away from the slavery of the Egyptians. We will let the evil-smelling poor quarters stand empty behind us, no one shall live any longer in the Ghetto or in Whitechapel, in darkest Paris or the outermost Nörrebro.[1] For I will lead you into a land in which the sun will shine in at your bedroom window every morning, and where your little children, clean and in whole garments, shall play on the green every day, and where you, when your work is done, can sit in the arbour, read the newspaper and hear the swallows and the evening bells."

Hitherto Socialism had been alone in working for the realisation of this ideal, and Socialism belonged to that spiritual world on which I had turned my back at my conversion. Deeply and obscurely, however, I felt that there was something here which I must try to regain and that Christianity, if it were to be genuine, would have to be social Christianity. Selma Lagerlöf's book, *The Miracles of Antichrist*, which had recently appeared, made a great impression upon me; its main idea also became mine: Socialism and the Christianity of the Church are both images of Jesus, one being genuine, the other an imitation, and it is by their miracles that the world shall recognise which is the right one. I began to study Catholic sociologists, from Ketteler and Manning to Charles Pesch and Georges Goyau, and became a subscriber to *La France libre*, the small paper edited by the "democratic abbés," Naudet and Lemire, which helped me to observe at a distance, as well as I could, what was going on.

Then, on October 8th, 1898, this happened: the French employer of labour and the Catholic friend of working-men, Léon Harmel, stood in the Vatican at the

[1] The north end of Copenhagen, in which some of the poorest streets are to be found.

head of a pilgrim procession of French workmen, and enthusiastically hailed Leo XIII as "the prophet whose bold glance sees into the future and understands the new age. And thus, Holy Father, will victory be won for the two causes which you have so greatly at heart: the cause of Our Lord and King, Jesus Christ, and that of His beloved children, the working people!"

Fifty years earlier Gregory XVI had rejected the democratic Christianity of Lamennais, and Lamennais had seceded and become the Romantic socialist who wrote *Paroles d'un Croyant*. Leo XIII allowed the Marseillaise to resound like the beat of eagles' wings over the clipped hedges in the gardens of the Vatican and cried to the French Catholic leaders, "Go out to the people!" "*Allez au peuple!*"

No one could have been quicker to seize upon those great words than France. And a wonder if it were not so, for what other Catholic people had, like the French, struggled for a hundred years with the contrast, *revolution —religion*, and tried to find a bridge from a new form of government to the old faith? Chateaubriand had already formulated the programme of *Liberal Catholicism*: "Without liberty there is no true religion, without religion there is no true liberty." Moreover, his liberal Catholicism was also social Catholicism. "A time will come," wrote the great poet and statesman soon after the revolution of July, "when no one will any longer be able to understand that a society has existed in which one man possessed a million and another had not enough to eat."

Following in the footsteps of Chateaubriand came the whole of the brilliant young generation of 1830—Lamennais, Lacordaire, *le plus pur des démocrates*, Montalembert, Gerbet, the whole of that ideally minded circle about *L'Avenir*, equally enthusiastic in the cause of Christ and of liberty. During the revolution of February the priests blessed the trees of liberty, and in July 1848 was published Père Gratry's Christian-democratic cate-

chism, *Les Sources de la Régéneration Sociale*, with a recommendation by three bishops and by Monsieur F. Chapot, *représentant du peuple.*

Gregory XVI had crushed *L'Avenir* by a papal bull; Pius IX, in his *Syllabus*, had condemned the thought that "the High Priest of Rome ought to become reconciled to modern civilisation." Leo XIII alone seemed to be willing to approve of the great ideas of 1789, of 1830 and 1848. A Catholic kingdom, that of Belgium, had been established on the four liberal, fundamental forms of freedom: freedom of thought, freedom of speech, freedom of the press, freedom of conscience. Leo advised the French Catholics to acknowledge the Republic and to join themselves to it. "The Church," he declared, "has in itself nothing to say against the people taking a greater or lesser part in the government of the state." The Encyclical on the social question, the Encyclical *Rerum novarum*, contained more than one sentence that caused an old Socialist to prick up his ears: this, for instance, about "the workers, who after the dissolution of the guilds, find themselves the helpless victims of *inhuman employers and of the exploitation of unscrupulous competition.*"

Such words as these seemed to me to augur the coming of a new era of a great reconciliation, in which old and new idealism, long mutually hostile, were at last to meet as reconciled brothers. During the pontificate of Leo XIII an optimism went forth from the Chair of Peter, leading one to hope for the most impossible things. There was a prevailing tendency to see essential unity under apparent opposition. All over Europe a movement arose, reaching from the Comte de Mun and the Marquis de la Tour du Pin to Marc Sangnier and Romolo Murri. All that the Catholic world contained of social good will, and secret twinges of conscience at the sight of the misery of the proletariat, rallied under the banner of Christian democracy. And he whose secret fear

it was, now more than ever, to be found an enemy before the Council of the spirits of light—he gratefully seized upon the new solution of the problem—fastened upon his breast the name which united the two powers hitherto hostile, like a red badge reminding him of that which he had worn in his youth.

II

With my wife and children I lived in "two rooms, with the use of kitchen" on a fourth floor in the Via Porta Pinciana, at the corner of Via Lazio. The house has since then become a hotel, but at that time we lived in a flat occupied by a worthy Roman couple: Signor Niccolò and Signora Annunziata and their son, a boy of about fourteen or fifteen. Signora Annunziata was large and red-haired and always clad in an old dressing-gown which frequently became unfastened in front, thus revealing contours usually, out of courtesy, called Junoesque. Signor Niccolò was small and as thin as a lath: he had at one time been a cardinal's chef, had now some post in an office but took a great interest in the cooking of his household, always giving it the finishing touch when he came home and had hung up his office coat. After dinner he would generally smoke a little, old pipe which he sometimes mislaid and then looked for all over the flat while loudly invoking the help of Sant' Antonio. When he found it he kissed it its burnt cheek and the saint who had helped him was accorded a heart-felt *Grazie, Sant' Antonio mio*! As a rule he and his wife got on very well together, only now and then did a tremendous storm break out—I remember Signor Niccolò and his son with all their might putting their shoulders against a door, behind which the wife and mother stood raging, and wanting to murder both of them with a kitchen knife. Usually, however, Signora Annunziata was peaceably disposed.

In the morning she could be heard singing in the kitchen as she watched the cooking of the beans : *Bollite, bollite, faggiolini miei !* "Boil, boil, my little beans !"

I generally stayed at home in the morning ; that was my time for work. Both the rooms were bedrooms, but I had a table for books and papers, and when my wife and children and the nurse had gone to the Villa Borghese to pick daisies in the Piazza Siena, I placed the table by the open window where the sunshine was beginning to come in, and looking up into the clear blue of a Roman sky I sat down to my writing. There, at that small table, which was too narrow for my elbows to rest upon it, and where the slightest movement caused a book or some papers to drop on the floor, I wrote *Our Lady of Denmark.*

In this book I declared myself a Christian democrat. Controversially (for I told a truth best by attacking its opposite) I asserted : "Free-thinking writers had always described the French Revolution from the point of view of having been equally justified in overthrowing both the Throne and the Altar—the Throne of Injustice, the Altar of Lies. They had been allies in life, they now had to be companions in death. The King and the Church together had sucked the blood of the people, therefore the people in its fury struck off their heads on the same guillotine."

While the truth, I maintained, was "something quite different." "Free-thinking had belonged to the tyrants and the salons : faith awoke with the people." I set up Voltaire and Rousseau as representatives respectively of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries of that which the Revolution had ended, and that which it had begun. From Voltaire proceeded—according to me—"that free-thinking, pleasure-loving, egoistic spirit which is still in our own day making man and mankind unhappy." From Rousseau, on the other hand, "the religious spirit and that spirit of the people which saw

in God a father and in its fellow-men its brothers." As examples of those who had been filled with the same spirit I mentioned, in Germany, "Ketteler, the great Bishop of Mainz, and the men of the German Centre: in England, Carlyle, Ruskin, the men of the Oxford Movement, Manning. "And, in a corrupted and mutilated form, did not the same thought lie at the bottom of *Socialism*, like an old treasure of gold at the bottom of a dirty and rushing river? Could one, might one not take the same word and christen it, turn the red banner into a Christian standard, crown it with the Cross and write upon it: *Christ and the People*?"

I made the hero of my book think such thoughts as these—I let him proclaim them from the platform in an idealised "Students' Hostel"; I let him carry them into effect with Mogens Ballin's money. The closing chapter in *Our Lady of Denmark* testifies to what young Catholics at the dividing line between two centuries hoped the future would bring. "Adjacent to the monastery and its church, the dedication of which, now as in bygone times, is intended to place Denmark under the gentle protection of the Mother of God, there is to be built an extensive series of factory buildings and workmen's dwellings. The principles espoused by Catholic national economists are to be applied there: every workman shall receive sufficient wages to allow him and his family to live decently and honourably, and after a certain number of years he is to receive a share in the profits of the factory. Sunday rest is to be strictly observed, the normal hours of a working day are to be kept. The factory is to be accessible to all the workers: the Catholics amongst them will receive the care of the priests with regard to church services and spiritual ministrations. In return a portion of the surplus income of the factory will be placed as an alms in the monastery funds."

Beautiful, naïve dreams, in which everything is

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achieved as easily as in a Sunday-school story! However, *Our Lady of Denmark* never materialised as anything but a book, never attained to reality in red or yellow brick buildings in the midst of the verdant solitudes of Esrom. Nor can it be said that the twentieth century has brought what young Christian democrats expected at the first rising of their sun. Or can it be that the events of the present day are the blood-tinged dawn of that day of which Herman Ronge dreamed? Was that unpractical and well-intentioned young man a soothsayer when he prophesied that the twentieth century would be "a century of conversion" and "put on the garments of penance which accord so well with the worker's attire?"

Be that as it may, my account with democracy was far from being settled with *Our Lady of Denmark*. Again and again was I filled with alarm at the thought that in allying myself with Catholicism I had betrayed the cause of the people, and I continued my search for a *modus vivendi*. One day as I turned the pages of Goethe's *Wahrheit und Dichtung* I saw in it, as the motto of the fourth part, a Latin sentence which made a great impression upon me: *Nemo contra deum nisi deus ipse*. In the place in question in his autobiography Goethe is speaking of Spinoza, probably the sentence is by him; the twice repeated *deus* with a small d would seem to suggest it. I wrote out the words with a capital D with this result: "No one fights against God except God Himself." That became my solution of the problem of Christian democracy, such as I set it forth in an essay on "The Papacy and Culture," written in the last year of the life of Leo XIII. I quote here some of the chief passages:

"'No one fights against God but God Himself.' How often was not this thought, as it were, forced upon me, when I pondered what was going on in modern Europe, and what had been going on during the last three or four centuries. Two mighty armies did I see there

arrayed against each other and at war with each other: the Christianity *of the Church* and *the political and social revolution.* The history of the present time undeniably presents a series of persecutions of the Church and a series of political and social *advancements* contingent, not to say dependent upon them. In all countries the liberal parties have been anti-clerical, sometimes even anti-Christian, in the sense that they have consciously placed themselves in opposition to fundamental Christian ideas and sought connection with pre-Christian culture, either that of Spartan Stoicism or Athenian epicureanism. From the point of view of Liberalism, which is the theoretical name of Revolution, the great foe is the Church. Each has accused the other of heresy and they have persecuted each other. Voltaire cried, *Ecrasez l'infâme*, and Pius IX issued his *Syllabus*. In itself the nature of revolution seems to be anti-Christian, and the nature of the Church seems in itself to be anti-liberal. On the basis of this idea the wars of culture are waged with fury."

This was the problem as it appeared to me then. I now tried to find a solution, aided by the key which Goethe had provided.

"*Nemo contra Deum nisi Deus ipse*—God is His own adversary, the only one worthy of Him! In order to fight against God one must fight *with* God. Or, to put it quite plainly: it is the principles of Christianity itself which are opposed to Christianity. And that is the actual driving force in the wonderful process known as the development of Christian culture.

"The principles of this culture are fixed by the nature of Christianity and the Church guards those principles with inflexible conservatism. That all men are brothers, and that the great commandment in the Law is love—these fundamental principles are proclaimed every day all over the world by thousands upon thousands of Christian priests and teachers. Moreover, these prin-

ciples are proclaimed, not as human opinions more or less doubtful, holding good to-day and to-morrow to be cast into the oven, but as revealed truth proceeding from the very author of existence and therefore with a claim to unconditional authority.

"To proclaim these principles—and to proclaim them as absolute truths—this, then, is *the educative mission of the Church*. Should she stray but a hair's breadth from this task, she would fail in her duty to humanity, because she would then shake the foundations of culture, because all that the Christian centuries have built up in the State and in society has been built up on this foundation: that this teaching about brotherhood and love of one's neighbour is undeniably valid, and that it is impossible one day to "re-value" it.

"Therefore," (I went on in my argument) "the Christian Church is necessary for Christian culture, as the foundations are necessary for the building. Here it is that the Church has her actual *social* task—which is far more important and essential than all the single works of mercy, so often pointed out, but which could very well be taken over by the State, and have been taken over in the course of time. The true *raison d'être* of the Church is not to be found in the Sisters of St. Vincent of Paul or the teaching orders; the world would have to be content without them if the Church (as it is insisted that she is) were in principle a danger to culture. The real reason why the Church *must* continue to exist, and why the overthrow of the Church would be synonymous with the overthrow of the culture of Western Europe, is this: that the whole of our ethical life rests upon Christian principles, and above all upon their absolute validity. But the Church *alone* teaches the absolute validity of these principles; she it is who permeates mankind from childhood with the fundamental laws of the Gospel, as with words from God's own mouth. Were this teaching to cease the consequences would

soon be evident and it would be discovered that the whole of modern culture is in reality only a *function* of the Church.

"If these considerations are right then the Papacy is also always of the highest social value, because in the Papacy the world has a perpetual guarantee that the same religious fundamental principles will continue to be proclaimed. So long as the succession of old men sitting in the Chair of Peter remains unbroken, so long will it continue to be proclaimed throughout the world: "Jesus of Nazareth is the Son of God and every word of His is therefore of divine authority." But that is all the world need believe in order to make continual progress.

"Can this point of view be maintained historically? As far as the Middle Ages are concerned there is no difficulty—Western civilisation has everywhere been acknowledged as the work of the Church. A thousand years after Constantine the Papacy created a culture containing names which are to this day amongst the greatest in the history of mankind: Francis of Assisi, Thomas Aquinas, Dante, Giotto—and in the struggle against Ghibellinism the Guelphic cause is also the cause of liberty—from the battle of Legnano onwards.

"But then comes the new age with its dual opposition: State versus Church, civilisation versus Christianity. This opposition has been regarded by both sides as a struggle between opposing principles—'here Christ, here Anti-Christ,' has been the battle-cry."

My need of unity would not allow me to accept this. The power which fought against Christianity seemed to me to resemble it like a brother. "Those who reject the Christian dogmas," I wrote, "usually do so only in order to glorify Christian ideas all the more. Humaneness, mercy, charity are on everyone's programme; even the gutter press has fresh air funds for poor children and collects money for needy families. If the Church is opposed with so much energy in France it is only for the

sake of gaining a victory for Christian principles—"to bring about the disappearance of class prejudice and to establish the spirit of brotherhood," as the French *Union démocratique* says in its programme. Christianity has penetrated the mental and emotional life of modern man and has become part of our culture. The "war of culture" of the modern social community is in reality a war waged with the object of realising on its own account the ideals of Christianity. This is so because, since the victory of the Cross over heathenism, nothing can come to pass in the world of Christian culture except in the sign of the Cross. *In hoc signo vinces—in this sign there is victory.* In a Christian *milieu* only Christian thoughts have any prospect of living and gaining ascendency—anti-Christian ideas are inevitably doomed to death and extinction.

"This is the key, then, to the modern development of culture. In a world penetrated by Christianity those thoughts alone which have sprung from a Christian source are able to hold their ground. Quite involuntarily man is guided in the direction leading to the fulfilment of the prayer that the kingdom of God may come, and that the will of God may be done on earth as it is in heaven."

In this optimism I found myself confirmed in a book by Antonio Fogazzaro, that thoughtful work, *Ascensioni umane*, sprung from an interior conflict such as my own. The Italian poet was at that time strongly interested in the strife then being carried on between the Darwinian doctrine of evolution and the Christian dogma of creation and would have welcomed a greater readiness on the part of the Church to meet evolutionism. He took comfort in the thought that in all progress there are two factors—one progressive, which gains new values, and one conservative, which preserves what has been gained. "In the world of human civilisation," he asserts, "it is the task of the Church to represent the con-

servative principle, while thought is the progressive element. It is natural, it is even well, that a conservative power should enter into the development of ideas in order to contend against the force that would re-shape them—analogous to that which takes place in organic development, in which the former principle is concerned with the preservation of the racial type, while the latter aims at producing new variations."

This biological interpretation pleased me, and I was of opinion that I could verify *two* social functions to be exercised by the Church. The first was that mentioned above, of proclaiming the principles of civilisation and progress. "In its dogmatic form Christianity is the basis of culture and its necessary condition. This is indisputable. The *mobile* principle of culture has been brought into the world by the *stable* dogma of the Church. But it is owing to this opposition," (here I was at Rhodos—here I would have to take the leap !) "it is owing to this opposition between the mobile and the stable that *the war of culture has been started.* The Church with her authority will always be on the side of the progress that has been made, and will not be inclined to allow herself to be caught in the drift of every new current produced by the times. "The Church takes small lessons at a time," Höffding [1] once said ironically, "and not until she has made 'due resistance' does she give her blessing to anything new." Apart from an ironical sense the resistance of the Church is still justified—even if the new element is flesh of her flesh, bone of her very bone. For the duty of the Church—which brings us to her other social task—is that of being the regulator of progress ; the authority which only after long and mature consideration bestows its weighty and important sanction."

In this way official-ecclesiastical conservatism is justified on the one hand, and on the other liberal Catho-

[1] See footnote, Vol. 1, p. 70.

licism and Christian democracy, to which I would fain confess myself an adherent, in fellowship with many other sensitive consciences and spirits never quite at ease.

"The resistance of the Church against the new is right, it is a duty, as the desire of thought for the new and the testing of all things is also right, is also a duty. In the world of the spirit both principles are necessary. If one of them ceased to act the world would either become rigid in the concentration of tradition or dissolve in an anarchy of ideas.

"Progress in the general spirit of religion continually gives birth to new social and political ideas which immediately demand the community as their sphere of action. But the community means mankind, and the weal and woe of the latter cannot be left to the experiments of chance. Hence the resistance of the Church against the new.

"The new therefore begins life in a struggle with the Church. On the Church devolves the thankless task of standing as "the enemy of progress," and hence as "the enemy of mankind." But the Church stands firm, allows herself to be calumniated, scoffed at, persecuted, and only tries to see whether, in ideas apparently modern, she cannot find her own, age-old doctrines.

"For if this be the case, if the new be really a scion of the old, of Christianity which was from the beginning, then it can be sure of victory. Then it will gain, first the noblest and the best, afterwards those whom the new will benefit; finally, with the power of the self-evident, all the members of the community.

"Then the time will have come when the Church can freely express her approval of the new, can give it her blessing and acknowledge it as her legitimate offspring.

"Until a new progressive thought springs up from the depths of Christianity and a new war of culture begins, a new confirmation of the truth of the words

with which these lines began : *Nemo contra Deus, nisi Deus ipse.* The ideas of Christianity are the only weapons that can be used in fighting against Christianity, in the name of, and therefore ultimately for the good of, Christianity. The temporal defeats of the Church are only apparent ; in reality they are victories for the spirit of the Church. "For Thou shalt overcome when Thou art judged," says the Psalmist."

III

We lived very quietly in Rome. Neither my wife nor I cared to associate with Danes and therefore we did not put down our names for membership in "The Scandinavian Society." We were invited a few times by Baroness Wedell-Jarlsberg, a daughter of my old friend, Baroness Rosenörn-Lehn, and received a visit or two from Danish tourists in Rome. But we felt so alien from the current Danish trend of thought and mode of speech, that we quite shuddered one day on the Palatine when we heard close by a company of young Scandinavians chattering about going to the "Society" that evening—"the genius is going to perform !" Who the genius was we never heard nor did we care. We were so far away from all home-grown geniuses.

It was in the year of Jubilee that we arrived in Rome. On the day of Christmas Eve Leo XIII had with great solemnity opened the *Porta santa* in St. Peter's and proclaimed the beginning of the year of Jubilee. "In this year of Jubilee," said the papal bull issued on that occasion, "we grant, by the grace of God, plenary indulgence, pardon and absolution of sins to all the faithful who in a true spirit of penance shall make confession and receive the Sacrament of the Altar, and who thereafter visit the basilicas of Saint Peter and Saint Paul, as also the church of Saint John Lateran and Santa Maria Maggiore, at least once daily on each of twenty

consecutive or respectively separate days. This applies to all the faithful who are domiciled in Rome. Those who are visitors here, on the other hand, shall visit the same basilicas during ten days. All of them must pray earnestly to God for the exaltation of the Church, for the extermination of heresy, for unity amongst Christian sovereigns and for the welfare of the whole of Christendom."

In the beginning of January my wife and I began our pilgrimages to gain the Jubilee indulgence. In itself a Jubilee indulgence is not more than any other plenary indulgence, it is only more difficult to obtain, and perhaps its greater value lies in this difficulty. In olden days, up to the time of Francis of Assisi, people journeyed to the Holy Land in order to gain the full blotting out of guilt and punishment. Later they made pilgrimages to Portiuncula on the one day in every year when the indulgence *de Terra Sancta* could be gained. Now there are a hundred ways of gaining the same spiritual benefits —only a little prayer before a crucifix and five or six Our Fathers or the like. In theory all this is of course right, but I have my doubts whether many indulgences are really gained on such easy conditions. The result corresponds to the effort, and a Jubilee indulgence requires work, but then it does bear fruit. As visitors my wife and I could fulfil the conditions with ten pilgrimages respectively to Saint Peter's, Santa Maria Maggiore, the Lateran and San Paolo *fuori le mura*. We made the ten pilgrimages on foot, partly because we had but little money, partly because we were devout Catholics and sincere in our intention. We made the first pilgrimage on January 6th and I read in the diary: "It is evident that this pilgrimage, on which one is compelled to act on the most absolute principles of faith, has the effect of making the tenets of the faith more *real*. Such an indulgence can only be gained on the basis of a *real* and *genuine* faith. Repugnance against indulgences is

therefore a sign of weak, unreal faith, a faith which belongs rather to imagination and feelings than to will and conviction. I felt this as we knelt in the outer hall of Saint Peter's to-day, the weak in faith *are not able* to kiss the lintels of Porta santa. I did it, but felt so small and cold and worldly of heart."

As a pilgrim I took my walks through Rome and by preference sought out old Rome, *la vera Roma*, as my favourite paper, *Voce della Verità*, called it. The Rome of 1899 was no longer that known to Danish readers from the descriptions of Vilhelm Bergsöe,[1] yet in many ways it differed a great deal from the modern city now living its clamorous life on the seven hills. Via del Tritone was still narrow and steep and contained no large shops or luxurious hotels; in Via Condotti you could walk in peace from one shop to another, without any danger of being run over by a hideous and overcrowded tram. Above all, *il traforo* did not exist. . . *il traforo*, that white-glazed, electrically brilliant, diabolically noisy entrance to the hell of modern culture. In the main Rome was still standing as *il Seicento* had created it; a city of baroque churches and baroque palaces, with narrow, shady, dirty streets in which there was a smell of garlic and *fritto misto*, with small squares where a quiet fountain tinkled amongst yellow façades, a city without variety theatres, and having no cinematographs. But the gaily coloured models from the Sabine mountains and the Abruzzi swarmed like swallows up and down the yellow Travertine steps of the Scala di Spagna, and the service-system in the shops was not well organised like that of Milan, with its *prezzi fissi* and politely indifferent assistants, but trade was carried on in semi-

[1] Bergsöe. Vilhelm (1835-1911) Danish author. Began his career as a zoologist but owing to eye-strain went to Italy for his health. The fruits of this journey were a series of novels, the best known of which is *From Piazza del Popolo*. In this he has mingled descriptions of Italian life with those of the lives of Scandinavian artists, one of them, Fra Pietro, being Albert Küchler. See foot-note p. 83.

dark, spicy-smelling booths, the entrance to which was decorated with garlands of fruit, and where one haggled over the price, sometimes continuing the discussion of purchase right along the pavement, ending, in spite of all one's cunning, in being cheated by a still more cunning tradesman.

In 1899 this homely old Rome was already beginning to disappear. In my *Roman Mosaics* I deplored it bitterly and quoted Julius Lange's words about the "Æsthetic Refuge of Europe," which Victor Emmanuel had closed. "Is there no longer any æsthetic refuge?" wrote the great art historian. "Has our misguided age to be punished with the loss of the place in which the clock stands where it has stood for centuries?" I endorsed this complaint. For many years I remained at this standpoint in regard to modern Italy. It was that of the æsthete, and it was that of the uncompromising Catholic. Not until 1914 had I left æstheticism so far behind and come so near to modern Italy that I could write: "It cannot be denied (and ought not to be denied) that the new Italy, the Italy which fought under the device: *Roma o morte!* 'Rome or death!' has accomplished a great and thorough work after attaining her end and establishing herself in the Eternal City. The writer of these lines has himself been amongst the number of those who complained of that which to a stranger looks like vandalism, a destruction of æsthetic values. In our sentimental egoism we want the picturesque hovels to be preserved, with no thought for the wretched state of the people who have to live in such tumble-down courts and alleys. It is easy enough to admire the rags in the Ghetto or Trastevere when you can get into a carriage afterwards and drive out to the new, sunlit quarters in Rome and have lunch in some *Eden* or *Elysium* hotel or other. Amongst Italians there is a latent but strong resentment against us foreigners because we will persist

in wanting them to go about and be poetic stage figures in picturesque surroundings. They decline to do so any longer, and we must reconcile ourselves to the fact and admit that a nation consisting of thirty-seven million people has a right to be master in its own house, without any consideration for what suits our sentimental notions" (*Nationaltidende*, December 16th, 1914).

I did not understand this at the time, and it is the mistake of many foreigners that they do not understand it to this day. One still often comes across the complaint, especially in English books of travel, that "poetry is disappearing." One forgets that poetry often becomes more accessible, and that the modern automobile routes make it possible at a small cost for an art pilgrim to visit the places which were formerly almost out of his reach. Everything takes time, and it took some time before the railways of Italy were on a level with those of her neighbours. On the other hand, her net-work of automobile routes is admirable, the connections practically arranged, with large convenient cars which keep their time to the minute. I said above that I find *il traforo* horrible, and that I do not understand why a tram which is actually dangerous to human life should pass through Via Condotti—of all streets—instead of going by way of Via Frattini. But Italians themselves see only a necessary evil in that diabolical tunnel underneath the Quirinal. And how one forgets it, when on a dewy summer morning between Todi and Massa Martana the automobile runs up through the mountain forests, and the car is filled with the sweet scent of all the gorse bushes in bloom along the road! And the car between Todi and Massa Martana is modern Italy too! Do not let us be ungrateful!

In 1899, however, the motor-car had not yet been invented. And I was in a Rome in which the old had passed away and the new was only beginning to come into being. I was completely absorbed in the past, in old Italy,

indeed, in a very old Italy, that of the catacombs and basilicas of Christian antiquity. These I studied in books and on the spot.

I have given the result of these studies in the first volume of the *Book about Rome*. Troubled as I still was in mind, in dread of being on the wrong track, I needed all the records I could obtain. That book was therefore very far-reaching as a work of Catholic apologetic, extracting the utmost possible proof from archæological facts. I still had a very great zeal for hammering down dogmas with historical four-inch nails, which was akin to my joy at being able to call myself a "Christian democrat." The authority of the Church had not yet become for me something that rested upon itself; I still tried to support it on outside authorities. It seemed to me that I should feel more secure in being a Catholic if I could say to the working people, "I have not forgotten you!" and if I had not to fear that a dogma might fail to be acknowledged by the supreme court of history. Unconsciously, and therefore the less able to shake it off, I was entangled in the error that the doctrines of the Church needed scientific buttressing, and that the cloak of charity, beneath which nineteen centuries have found shelter, required patching with scraps of another and inferior cloth, of imitated material. It was such thinking as this that produced *Modernism*.

There was still a third place in Rome—besides the catacombs and the basilicas—in which I sought confirmation of (I had almost said) *the right* to be a Catholic. This was in the *rooms of the Saints*—those rooms and cells in which saints have lived or saints have died—Saint Benedict's house and room in Trastevere, the palace, cell and triclinium of Gregory the Great on Monte Celio, the dwelling of Saint Birgitta in the Piazza Farnese, the room in which Saint Catherine of Siena died near Santa Maria sopra Minerva, Saint Benoît Labre's room near Santa Maria dei Monti. . . . One by one I visited

these rooms, and while I had hitherto only been responsive to mediæval saints, particularly San Francesco, I now began to feel drawn to the spiritually great men of the Baroque period, and to one of them in particular—Philip Neri.

I had more than one reason to feel affection for Philip Neri. His Order had bestowed upon England and the world two Catholic writers so great and modern as Newman and Faber. At home in Denmark I had studied his life and the gentle, refined and humble-minded Florentine had seemed to me to be the historical opposite of his contemporary further north: the angry, violent, self-opinionated and rebellious Saxon. *Pippo buono* ("good Philip") and "Doctor Luther"—to me it was like a retort courteous—the noble and beautiful answer of Rome to the rough speech of Germany, and by its moral value a proof of which was right.

Every year on the 16th of March one of the old palaces of the nobility stands open in honour of San Filippo, the Palazzo Massimi in the Corso Vittorio Emanuele. In one of the rooms, now transformed into a chapel, Saint Philip Neri on this day in the year 1583 recalled to life Paolo Massimi, a boy of fourteen, heard his confession, spoke with him for half an hour about heavenly things and then bade him go hence. In commemoration of this miracle the Palazzo Massimi is open to everyone on that day; flowers and green branches are strewn outside the house, the columns at the entrance are adorned with garlands and red cloth; through the large, Renaissance rooms with coffered ceilings and diamond-shaped window panes, a stream of devout visitors passes from morning till night, and in the closely filled chapel Mass after Mass is said and sung, singing and praying continuing throughout the whole day.

From the Palazzo Massimi the road leads to the neighbouring *Chiesa nuova*. In the uppermost storey of the large house next to the church (once a monastery, now

a barracks, where, however, the memorials of *il Santo* are preserved) are situated San Filippo's rooms; he liked an uninterrupted view of the sky. In the first room you see his bench, his bed, his cupboard and his confessional. In the second, which was his private chapel, stands his altar, with a picture of the Madonna above it, and on the wall hangs his crucifix, together with a picture of Sant' Antonino of Firenze, the holy bishop of his native town. The door leading in to this private chapel is still the same as in the time of Saint Philip; here it was that the card was hung up bearing the words: "Father Philip is saying Mass," when he remained in ecstasy half-hour after half-hour, bowed over the corporal on which the Saviour of the world was lying as once He lay in the straw of the Crib in Bethlehem; and over the golden chalice containing the Blood shed at Golgotha.

From the cells of the saint I went to the saint's tomb and prayed before the sarcophagus containing the ashes of *Pippo buono:* "Holy Philip, thou whom I have loved so long and from so far away! Now that I am really here in thy house, in thy chamber, by thy body, pray for me, pray for those dear to me, pray for Denmark and for the Catholic Church in the North. Grant to me a little of thy great, strong, generous faith and a spark of the fire of love that glowed in thy heart!"

Not only in the *Chiesa nuova* and the cells of the former Oratorian house did I seek the footsteps of Philip Neri. On Mount Janiculum, between St. Onofrio and the statue of Garibaldi, near Tasso's oak, amongst tall cypresses, there is a sort of amphitheatre on whose semicircular seats of brick San Filippo and the company of young people who usually gathered round him were wont to rest. It was here that he said: "You may chop wood on my back if you like, if only you do not commit a sin!" It was here that he cried, "Be happy, little children! I do not want to see any sad faces!" *State allegri figlioli!*"

A long way out of Rome, out in the bare campagna, is the road of the seven churches, *Via delle sette chiese*, from San Paolo *fuori le mura* to San Sebastiano on the Via Appia. Philip often walked along that road, on his favourite pilgrimage to the seven chief churches of Rome; in his youth he walked alone, as an old man he was followed by thousands of pilgrims and great companies of young folk, always his gaze was turned heavenwards, his face radiant with joy and a kind smile showing through the white beard. What was the cause of his joy, what was the secret of his smile? An inscription on the wall of a chapel by the wayside tells us, in the same words with which he used to prove the vanity of everything mortal and point towards the immortal: "*E poi? E poi? E poi tutto passa!—Paradiso! Paradiso!*" "All earthly things pass away. Paradise alone is eternal."

Tutto passa—was there anything I knew better than that all things perish, pass away—I, who had always looked back after a vanished happiness? But: *Paradiso! Paradiso!* did I dare to join also in this cry? Was there a Paradise ahead too—was there a Paradise also for me?

I had not forgotten, could not forget, the visions of Assisi. My *Book about Rome* therefore concludes with these lines:

"But a wayfarer from a country still further north, and still more Protestant than Newman's England, walked one day in early spring along the *Via delle sette chiese near Rome*. . . . He came to San Sebastiano and he descended into the catacombs and stood in the subterranean chapel in which San Filippo had prayed through long days and nights.

"And the stranger left San Sebastiano and walked back to Rome by the old Appian Way, past the walls of vineyards, the walls of catacombs, past ancient basilicas. The day was grey and quiet, birds twittered softly among the half-opened leaves of the trees by the roadside, away on the Via Ardeatina rumbled a creaking cart.

For a moment the stranger turned, saw the valley behind him, the church of San Sebastiano below, and over on the other hill, where the Via Appia again ascends, the grey and crenelated pinnacles of the tomb of Cecilia Metella.

"Then the grandeur, the fulness, the majesty of life swept in upon the lonely wayfarer and overwhelmed him. "Oh, God," he said, half to himself, "here I stand before the gates of Rome. Above me is the boundless sky and under me the boundless abyss, and before me, where all roads end, inescapable death is awaiting me. Here I stand, oh God, and it is Thy will that I shall live, and Thou wilt that I shall live according to Thy will. Thou hast given me a heart to struggle with, senses to overcome, temptations to resist, doubts to kill. And Thou knowest, oh God, how my fight will end.

"Oh God, I tremble when I think of what a human life is! It is impossible that a soul should pass into nothingness. Thou hast not created heaven and earth that the spirit of man might burst in it like a bubble! I do not comprehend Thy ways, oh God, but I understand that here on earth a knot is to be loosed or bound and to remain loosed or bound in all eternity! Nothing can shake me in this belief.

"What is it, then, I am working here on earth? Am I of those whom Thou wilt loose from their bonds, or am I amongst those who bind themselves in everlasting chains? Many rise up in arms against me, and often I seem to myself to be a man of darkness, fighting against spirits clothed in radiant light. . . .

"Oh God, one thing only I know; I have not desired to go against Thy will since the time when I learned that Thou wert, and what Thou wouldst. My unrighteousness comes from my old, evil heart and from blindness, from ignorance. Let me therefore not despair, let me atone for my wrongdoing, let not the abyss obtain power over me and drag me down to it. . . .

"One thing I have, oh God, one only and nought besides. I have loved Thy saints and the radiance of the glory about their brows. Only if *they* are evil am I too wholly evil, only if *they* are lost am I altogether lost, and they who speak against me are right.

"But then do I no longer know light from darkness or good from evil. Then all that makes man good, pure, loving, happy, comes from hell; and all that makes man hard, bitter, cold, unchaste, unblest, comes from heaven. Then I do not know any longer where I am in the world, and then existence must be the work of a liar and deceiver—an evil delusion, which shall be torn asunder one day when all is too late, and show us all nothing but a yawning abyss, full of vapour and darkness and torment. . . .

"But, oh God, it is not true, it is not true! I trust in Thee, in Thy love, Thy faithfulness—I hope in Thee, notwithstanding all my sin and my weakness. I believe in Thee, because there is no one else in whom to believe, there is no other in whom to hope, there is no other in whom to trust. There is but Thee, the God of heaven and earth, made man in Jesus of Nazareth, crucified for us, crucified in us, living and teaching until the last day in the Church built on the Rock of Peter! Have mercy, then, upon him who cries to Thee by the tombs of Thy saints, and who has no other hope of redemption for himself and his sin but Thee, Lord, who hast made heaven and earth, and who will let no one be lost who cries to Thee from the dust and the shadows!"

IV

In Rome I associated with the dead, not with the living. Ferdinand Brunetière, whose conversion had made so great an impression upon me, and whose *Discours de combat* I read and annotated, came to Rome and gave lectures to the members of fashionable society there; I did not hear him and did not make his acquaintance. With introductions from Baroness Wedell-Jarlsberg, who interested herself on my behalf in Rome as her mother had done in Denmark, I called on one or two Roman ecclesiastics: Monseigneur d'Armailhacq, at San Luigi dei Francesi, and the French Capucin, Père Pie de Langogne. "Interesting books were lying on his table," I noted in the diary after my visit to the latter, and the sentence is a sigh. For the Anker money had been spent during my illness in Assisi and we lived partly on a small monthly allowance from Ernst Bojesen —advance payments of *Our Lady of Denmark*, which I was then writing—partly on fees for articles sent to Alfred Ipsen's daily paper, *Samfundet*. The diary says, "Wealthy travellers do not know what it means having to do at one and the same time: 1. See Rome (and that thoroughly, fruitfully), 2. Write a novel, 3. Write for a paper, 4. Send contributions to *The Catholic*, 5. Translate Sven Hedin's *Across Asia* (I had begun this work in Denmark and had not yet finished it), 6. Translate the Roman Missal (in collaboration with Niels Hansen and the now deceased Halfdan Kejser I had undertaken this honourable but difficult task, the result of which did not appear till many years later), 7. Teach my son, 8. Assist in making purchases, 9. Read books and papers for my own use" (Jan. 5). My studies suffered under the want of time and the want of money. "I had to go past the catacombs of Domitilla as I had to pass the tombs of the Scipios, the Jewish catacombs, the ancient churches of San Nereo ed Achilleo, Sant' Urbano, San Giovanni

in oleo. The Christian as well as the pagan sacred places are only opened on the payment of soldi, of which we have so few" (Feb. 12). Often our pecuniary circumstances were rather harassing. On February 24th the diary states: "We possess to-day only 6 lira, of which 3 and 15 centesimi are spent on half a lamb, the most economical form of provision. I buy it in one of the cheap shops near the Pantheon and carry it home in a newspaper which I have brought with me for the purpose." "I foresee," is the entry some days later, "that this time also I must leave Italy without having seen Siena, Pisa, Orvieto, Padua and many other towns—without having visited Subiaco, Montecassino, Mont' Oliveto, Mont' Alverna. And I am poor and shall never be able to visit Italy again! This opportunity is unique, it is the last! And I am living here without making any acquaintances. I live at a distance, in the shadow, without taking any part in the Catholic life of Rome, unable to attend all the services, unable to work as I should wish to do. I must look in the other direction, then, at the purely *spiritual* side in order to derive some benefit from this journey. In this respect it cannot be denied that there has been a gain. I am making progress in the fear of God and in contempt of myself.

"But the future fills me with disquiet. Soon, perhaps, my sisters will be without support, my children are growing and their number increases. How am I going to educate the latter, support the former, with this poor implement, my pen, which is my only means of earning a livelihood? My God, show me the way I must go! Help me to understand my duty! Let me find a way out of this darkness! Let me choose that which is most perfect, that which responds best to Thy most holy will! My God, give us our daily bread in the way which tends most to Thy glory and to the welfare of my soul!"

We had a happy Christmas Eve in Rome. "In the afternoon" (says the diary), "in Santa Maria Maggiore,

where Vespers are sung. After that a Christmas feast at home, more devout and beautiful, perhaps, than any in Copenhagen. No Christmas tree, but a Crib, round which there are branches and scarlet berries. I read aloud from the Gospel, one of my own poems, then something from *Christmas Roses* and *Christmas Eve*.[1] The children get their gifts, a horse, a lamb, a Mass service, a doll. At the table Tulle, as usual, tells stories about herself; she is an empress and owns many wild animals which, at her command, can eat us all up, 'so that nothing is left but the bones!' But when she says her prayers later, and is alone for a minute beside the Crib, I see her from the next room pulling off her little crocheted slippers and putting one into the Crib, which, being only of cardboard, is nearly upset, so that I go to the rescue. 'What are you doing, Tulle? She looks up at me, still holding the other little pink slipper in her hand. "I wanted to give the Jesus Child my slippers, Daddy, because He hasn't got any."

From midnight till half-past one in the morning my wife and I were present at the three Masses of the Nativity, and on Christmas Day we went to hear the sermons of the Roman children before the Child Jesus in Aracoeli. On the following day we were all invited to see the Christmas tree at Baroness Wedell-Jarlsberg's, and there in the Villa Borghese we met the artist couple, Harald and Agnes Slott-Möller. Soon, though, we were back in our solitude and the disquieting thoughts returned. The notes for December 29th contain these lines: "Depressed. It seems to me that I accomplish nothing, see nothing. Visit in the afternoon to the Colosseum, a walk along the Via Appia. We talk about settling in Rome. But how is it to be done? And I seem to myself so thoroughly insignificant and pretentious."

At that time I was thinking about a plan for a drama or a dramatic poem about *Torquato Tasso*. Ibsen had pub-

[1] Danish Christmas numbers.

lished that winter *When we dead awaken*, with its proclamation of the *spiritual death of all who are resigned.* In my Tasso I wanted to describe: 1. The poet's feeling of powerlessness, the terrible admission: "I am no good any longer!" 2. The feeling that the others are right, a feeling awakened in me at the sight of the prolific production of Radicalism in my own country: 3. Letting Tasso seek refuge in religion, represented by one of the disciples of Philip Neri. Conclusion: Tasso sitting under the oak, near Philip Neri's amphitheatre, pondering the words, *Tutto passa.*

It was quite clear to me, however, that this was not a solution of the problem. Christianity could not mean a lessening of life; on the contrary, it must mean its full unfolding. I explained my own case to myself in Goethe's words about the state in which he found himself after the removal to Weimar: "It is with me as it is with the trees when they have been pollarded. Later on they send out new shoots all the more abundantly, but during the first years they look like bare sticks." My branches had also been lopped and I now stood by the high road like a bare pole, a scare-crow to meet the gaze of my compatriots when they passed by, a warning to others of like mind not to go and get Catholic bees in their bonnets. But I was no Goethe—could I have the same hope, then, of bearing later on the richer a crown?

On New Year's Eve my wife and I were in St. Peter's and heard the solemn midnight Mass with which Leo XIII wished the new year to begin. The diary says: "Mass, *Te Deum*, *Tantum ergo*, Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament, *Veni Creator Spiritus*—so strangely ineffective, so remote and unreal. I am seized with spiritual weariness, religion seems to me to have no force, no influence; as for myself, I am faint of heart, without faith, hypocritical and bad. And life shows me a more and more serious face. I do not know any longer what path we ought to take. Shall we stay here—or return

to Denmark ? Am I not played out as a poet ? Would it not be better if I tried to find a humbler position in life ?

"My wife points out my egoism to me, my lack of a sense of duty towards her and our children. I see that she is right. And as we go home from St. Peter's, while the bells are ringing over us in the clear, starry night, I beg her forgiveness. My God, how beautiful our life might be if I were a real Christian ! My God, I, who have been at the gates of death, I do not tremble with joy at having been permitted to live and to spend this marvellous night in the Vatican basilica ! No *Te Deum* ascends from my heart, God has spoken to me in vain—oh, horrible ingratitude !"

With this sense of deep unworthiness I entered upon the new year and the new century. The diary for New Year's Day, 1900, says : "My God, do not any longer deny me that grace which is revealed in God our Saviour, 'which teaches us to renounce worldly desires and live in this world soberly, justly and piously!'" "Grant me at last to feel, Lord Jesus Christ, that we are really *redeemed from all iniquity* and that we may be, as the Epistle for the day says, 'an acceptable people, a pursuer of good works.' Let me no longer feel so far from Thee in all my life, full of shame at being called a Christian—with the same name as Thy holy martyrs ! Lord, keep Thy promises and save me from the unfaith that threatens me because I am so weak in that which is good !"

I was still busy with new literary plans. As a further result of my journey I was thinking of writing three studies, with the titles "A Grave in Florence," (Nicolaus Steno) "Angela of Foligno" and "The Apostle of Unity" (Ernest Hello). At the same time I continued my wanderings in old, true Rome, in the afternoons accompanied by my wife and children. In this way we saw the churches on the Aventine, San Lorenzo in Damaso and the house of Saint Birgitta, San Giovanni dei Fiorentini and San Girolamo della Carità (in memory of San

Filippo), the theatre of Marcellus and Octavia's arcade, San Giorgio in Velabro, the arch of Janus and Santa Maria in Cosmedin, at that time not yet restored. In the vestibule of the latter stands the well-known *Bocca della Verità*, a huge stone mask with an open mouth which snaps closed if one who has told a lie puts his hand into it. One by one we thrust our hands into the cavernous mouth of the monster, but when Tulle's turn came she shrank back. "For it quite looks as if it could do it," she explained.

Again and again the sense of my poetic impotence made me anxious. I did not write verse any more, and *Our Lady of Denmark* was only in a secondary sense a novel, much more was it a chain of philosophical, political and religious essays, loosely held together by a frail and mainly internal action. I reassured myself, for instance, in this way: "If I were a Catholic, as I was previously a free-thinker and moral rebel, Catholicism would in me bear the fairest artistic fruits. But the energy of the times (and my own energy) is greater for evil than for good, therefore the art of the times is greatest in the service of evil." (Jan. 12, 1900).

But the memories of the visions in Assisi filled me with still greater disquiet. Again and again I was haunted by the awful mystery of *predestination*. "A fearful sense of pre-determination," says the diary of January 16th. "God *knows* whether I am to be saved or damned and I do *not* know. But often, when I am praying with my children, it is with a terrible sense of *being separated from them* in an inexpressible, terrifying, everlasting way." I studied in books of devotion and theological works that which is called *signa conjecturalia*, the signs by which one may know with tolerable certainty whether one is amongst those on the right side or the left. Generally eight are mentioned: 1. constant effort to have a good conscience; 2. that one has an inclination to prayer, to the reading of pious books and to

hearing the Word of God; 3. that one frequently recalls to mind the Passion of Christ and trusts in His merits; 4. that one is resigned to the Will of God, especially in trials, and this may even be said to be the essential sign of being pre-destined to life, "for whom he foreknew, he also predestinated to be made conformable to the image of his Son"; (Rom. viii 29), that is, first crucified and suffering, then risen, with Him and reigning with Him; 5. that one practises the virtues mentioned in the eight beatitudes (Matt: v, 3-11) especially humility, to which God gives grace; 6. that one loves God and all that has to do with God, religion, divine service, priests, devout people, the Church, her progress and exaltation; 7. love of one's neighbour, charity towards the poor; 8. great devotion to the Blessed Virgin, to whom the Church applies the words: "Whoso findeth me, findeth life" (Proverbs viii, 35).

I now examined myself with these eight points, as with eight touchstones, but I found only little in which to take comfort. At the best I might perhaps say "yes" to point 2 and point 6—I also gave willingly to the poor and might therefore apply point 7 to myself. But as for remembering the Passion of Christ, being patient and resigned to the will of God, I made but a poor show. I was as explosive as gunpowder and answered back when unpleasant things were said to me. Only too well did I understand Saint Francis when he said to Brother Masseo that "those most holy eyes (of God) have not seen amongst sinners one more vile than I." During my work of translating *The Little Flowers of Saint Francis* I had found this saying and I always returned to it as a summing up of the whole matter.

V

In the middle of February spring began. "It is the most beautiful, the warmest spring weather to-day,"

says the diary of February 17th. "We have our meals by the open windows and there are vases filled with anemones and violets in the rooms. My wife, the children and the nurse go to the Villa Borghese, I sit in my solitude and from the street below I hear the cries of the orange-sellers: *Aranci, aranci dolci! Mandari! Un Soldo!*"

We wished for nothing better than to stay out the Roman spring. But Ernst Bojesen had only pledged himself to five months and as there was no prospect of other resources we had to think of the journey home. Before leaving I wanted very much to see the Pope and through the kindness of Baroness Wedell-Jarlsberg I succeeded in obtaining three tickets for one of the large audiences in the Sistine Chapel. I have given a detailed description of this audience in *Roman Mosaics*, and I still remember the deep emotion that seized me as I saw the countenance which I recognised from so many pictures, appearing in the doorway of *La Sistina* between the white ostrich feather fans, and behind me a young German Benedictine bursting into tears: "*Da ist er—da ist er—so seh' ich ihn endlich—Benedictus qui venit in nomine Domini—benedictus—benedictus*!" Leo XIII was then ninety years old and the impression he made was altogether supernatural. The diary has these notes: "Slowly the Pope is borne onward. From the gallery loud cries ring out: *Evviva il Papa*, *Vive Léon treize*! and a woman's voice rang piercingly clear through all the rest, flinging out a *Viva il Papa Re!* From the body of the chapel itself voices were raised—as the Pope drew nearer we all shouted involuntarily. We all also began to weep. For how wonderfully aged he is—he looks as though he had been awakened from the dead—as though he had been lying in his grave and had just risen for a moment to decide this important matter of creating two cardinals. It had been dark in the chapel until his arrival, outside there were spring showers. But the sun shone as the Pope came in and as he retired, and he looked bright

and happy and festal in his crimson cloak over the white soutane, with his brilliant brown eyes and the large, fatherly smile. In a strong, clear voice he sang the words of benediction: *Adjutorium nostrum*—and then, slowly and solemnly, after having kissed the altar: *Benedicat vos omnipotens Deus, Pa-ter et Fi-lius et Spiritus Sanctus*! As he passed out he looked straight down into our faces and we cried up to him jubilantly: *Evviva il Papa! Evviva! Evviva!* and I felt in how great a degree I really wished that he might live," (March 26).

Yet notwithstanding the spring and the Pope's benediction, my spiritual distress continued. Two days after this audience the diary has these lines: "I pray without recollection, lose myself in my prayers, continually have to begin again from the beginning. I feel a deep loathing of myself. My name is repulsive to me, when I see it, for instance, on the outside of the manuscript of my new book. Its long, dragging syllables are repugnant to me. I wish for another name, a new name, like that spoken of in the Apocalypse. I understand why a new name is given to those who enter the religious life and I am reminded of the horror that filled me in the visions in Assisi at being called what I was called. One's name is a sign, as one's face is. It means something to have just those looks; it means something to have just that name. Something is meant by this man getting the name of Cain, and that one Abel. One can feel distinguished, characterised, pointed out, stamped, cast out, by one's very name. There are names which seem to be pre-destined and I ask myself whether the bestowal of names by the Church (which occurs in a sacrament) is not a forerunner of that great, terrible roll-call at the end of time, when one single Name shall save or condemn, and when all earthly names shall melt as though in fire, shall be cleansed and reveal their true meaning, their essential relationship with one of the two

great, eternal names in which all things end—*Benedictus! Maledictus!* (March 28).

On the 10th of April, together with my wife, I completed the pilgrimage of indulgences to the four large basilicas which we had now visited ten times. At the same time I succeeded in completing my studies of the catacombs and paying that visit to the Coemeterium of Domitilla which, owing to a lack of lira for admission, I had hitherto had to forego. One more last walk did I take along my dear *Via della sette Chiese*; the diary says: "It is a little after five o'clock in the afternoon, near the catacombs of Domitilla; I stand looking towards Rome. The day is grey and quiet, birds are twittering softly in the half-opened trees along the side of the road which goes out across the green campagna. A man with a spade on his shoulder walks heavily past; I hear a cart over on the Via Appia. In the horizon I see the dome of St. Peter and in front of it the Aventine with the towers of Sant' Anselmo and Santa Sabina. Further along in the line of vision stand Monte Mario, Pincio, Villa Medici, Torre delle Milizie, Santa Maria Maggiore, the Lateran. From a house a short way off a little bell rings a couple of strokes. And I think of our having to go away soon, and in sadness and regret I look in towards dear San Pietro and feel as though I had to leave my home" (April 4th).

"Dear San Pietro"—for to me, as to all Catholics coming to Rome San Pietro had become very dear. Even before our arrival, from the window in the train, I had looked for the dome and seen it for an instant a long way off, ethereally blue above the green campagna, in full reality, not lying in ruins as I had seen it in the dream at Assisi. On the very first afternoon I directed my walk to St. Peter's and it had been wonderful to step out from the dark and narrow Borgo on to the large, bright and quiet square where the fountains plash and where you look up to the windows in the ochre-yellow Vatican—

"there he lives, up there!" Then you go past the obelisk with the relic of the Cross on the top, and the eight points of the world engraved in the flagstones at its base, as if to say that from this spot the roads go out all over the world, as they once did from the gilded milestone on the Forum—For the first time you walk up the shallow, semicircular steps, by the golden yellow steps, to the great terrace which is like the very shore of eternity—Then the first sight of the great, greenish bronze doors—for the first time you put your shoulder against the heavy leather curtain—it falls to behind you and you are inside the ever cool, ever clearly lit basilica—here there is no dreamy dusk, no mystic semi-gloom—the light is white, pure and clear, as it is in scholastic philosophy—with a clearness that is pleasing, satisfying, bracing and that makes you exult inwardly, as when you read Saint Thomas—Far away, at the foot of the high altar with the spiral columns and the baldacchino against the golden yellow light of the choir window the seventy-three sanctuary lamps burn like flowers of flame on the grave of the Galilean Fisherman—Standing against a pillar is his statue in bronze and you kiss his foot—the touch of the worn, yellow metal is cold against your forehead and the lips that murmur the prayer of Bellarmine: "Obedience and peace!"—You look up to the dome, up, where the tremendous words burn in imperishable flames—the words upon which are built the Church of Saint Peter and all Catholic churches and the whole of the Catholic Church—the words spoken in Caesarea Philippi to Simon Bar Jona: "Thou art Cephas, thou art the rock —and upon this rock. . . "

Ten times had my wife and I walked on our pilgrimage of indulgence to Saint Peter's—ten early mornings in the basilica in which there was the coolness of night and marble. On New Year's night we had begun the twentieth century in Saint Peter's, we had now heard the

Lamentations sung there in Holy Week, and one warm and sunny spring afternoon as we came away with the children and walked across the square, we had had a remarkable encounter. I have related it in *Roman Mosaics* and reproduce the incident here :

"Opposite the obelisk in the middle of the square a tall, elderly priest came towards us—a stately, dignified figure with a grand and beautiful face, a Jupiter countenance, wreathed about by a flowing beard sprinkled with grey. He was clad in an ample ashen-grey habit and carried a rosary in his right hand. As he passed the nurse, who was carrying the youngest of the children, he slackened his walk. Fixing his great eyes, whose clear brown gleamed in the sun, upon the child, and with a smile that seemed to well up radiant from depths of overflowing benevolence, he made the sign of the cross with the cross on his rosary upon the infant's brow. The child's mother, who was a little way in front, turned half round and looked back, then seized both the other children by the hand and brought them to the priest, exclaiming, *Mon Père, bénissez ausssi ceux-ci* !" Then the smile of the unknown ecclesiastic shone with a still greater and tenderer radiance and with a slow movement of his hand he blessed the children. He then walked up, bowing and smiling, towards the basilica ; he passed me by so closely that I touched the hem of his garment. And as I looked into that strong, beautiful face, which seemed to radiate light, I felt in my inmost soul what an overwhelming joy it must be with all one's heart to love God and love mankind ; no more to hate, no more to loathe, no more to despise, but to love every living soul, to love with the love of God, to surrender oneself altogether to that almighty love, whose white fire is the core of the life of the world, and to let oneself be borne upward, upward into a spring sunshine glowing ever and ever purer, and under which the gloom and anger and stubborn melancholy of the

earth lies like a drowned land deep down underneath a shining sea of clear and imperishable light."

On that day in Saint Peter's square I had had the deepest perception of what the church of Saint Peter most intrinsically is—the inexhaustible well from which the love of Christ flows out over the world. From here the apostles and evangelists go forth, the missionaries and great friends of mankind; to this place they return to seek strength at Peter's grave and counsel at the feet of his successor. It is not without significance that the Risen One asked of Simon: "Lovest thou me more than these?" And it was at the answer: "Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee," that Simon was appointed to be the Great Shepherd.

"Dear San Pietro!" It was there that my wife and I received the sacrament of the altar together on Easter Morning 1900. According to Roman custom a memorial leaf was distributed to the communicants; I read upon it the following prayer: "Jesus, my Redeemer! One thing I ask of Thee, one thing I have always desired: that I may overcome the enemies of my soul, enter in at the gates of heaven and live in Thy house for ever." "Nought else have I ever desired, nought else have I ever asked for," I added in my diary.

The next afternoon, April 16th, we left Rome. On the 18th we arrived in Berlin and on the 20th we were in Copenhagen.

THE BASILISK

Quasi basiliscus qui speculo interficitur.
Revel. S. Brigittæ iv, 84.

"*Like the basilisk, which must die when it beholds itself.*"
Saint Birgitta.

I

After my return to Denmark I resumed the editorship of *The Catholic*, which had been taken over by Niels Hansen during my absence. As in my youth, I was again at war with society, for the ideas which I had fought for then were now on the conquering side, but I, who had taken part in the struggle, was not present on the day of victory.

Johannes V. Jensen, against whom I had turned in a polemical article, had made his appearance in Danish literature at the time when I (in the opinion of my former friends) was leaving it. His first book, *Danskere*[1] came out in 1896, the year in which I became a Catholic. In this book he acknowledged his spiritual debt to me, and he has since related how as a young student in Copenhagen he "used to walk about in the streets frequented by Johannes Jörgensen, looking at everyone he met in the hope that it might be he!" It must have been in the winter of 1893-4 that the youth of twenty went about on this quest—the winter in which Carl Buhl and I began *The Tower*, and when another highly gifted young man of twenty, Christian Rimestad, sent me his first verses, dedicated to "The Master." Alas! the Master was but

[1] Danes.

an apprentice in the slow lesson of life, but those naïve and enthusiastic young people did not know any better and saw me with a halo—as I had once seen *my* masters!

In 1896 Johannes V. Jensen sent me *Danskere*. I wrote a *feuilleton* on it in *Tiden*, and Johs. V. Jensen came to call upon me. The fanatically pale, icily fair-haired young man sat in my low-ceiled, dark room, proclaiming his radical and desperate amoralism: "We shall have to go back to the year One to live on what has hitherto been called evil!" A friend of his of the years which he has described in *Danskere*, a wild and violent Jutlander, who, strangely enough had been set to study theology, used to come and see me too at this time, wanted to become a Catholic, but found it beyond his powers, and at last broke off all association with me. I was not later to come into closer touch with Johannes V. Jensen or his set, but when I read his rich and wild poetry I felt very well that they were right who called him "Johannes II." Here was the self-glorifier and the mighty one who did not bend the knee to any god, and in whom, with whom, Knut Hamsun, when he visited Copenhagen during those years, found again and lived again in far fuller measure, that which my friendship with the great Norwegian had been ten years earlier.

My relations with Danish literature in general and with Johannes V. Jensen in particular were thus marked by a painful duality. I will go even further—I will say that the pain of this duality penetrated the whole of my relationship with poetry. I had felt it on that Easter journey to Beuron—on the moonlight evening in Würzburg. I had felt it again in Firenze, on the way to Assisi, when I had bought a number of *Il Marzocco* at a bookstall and found in that literary paper an article on Pascoli's collection of poems, *Myricae*, which had then recently appeared. There were in my life moments of deep anguish, when those old gods called to me from afar, and when I could hear from the thickets the allur-

ing and plaintive sound of Pan's syrinx. But the kingdom of heaven was surely worth a reed-pipe ?

My activities during those years as a literary critic were in reality a chain of continual and contant struggles with the poet and romantic in myself. My hand was against every man, but it was myself I attacked and fought against and ill-treated. Or did not my whole heart quiver when the young wizard of words took his violin and sang "an old and mighty chaunt about bygone days, an unutterable note," and did not the words burn upon my lips : "Thou art my son ! greater than I because thou art truer, and truer because thou art stronger !" But of course I dared not follow the alluring note, ought not, knew it was not the path for me, who had become a son of Rome and who could no longer be permitted to eat of the meat sacrificed on the altar of heathen gods. . . .

My hand was against every man and every man's hand was against me. In those first years I published *Our Lady of Denmark* (in answer to certain attacks), then the little book about Father Damien, the apostle of the lepers ; after that two volumes of my *Book about Rome* ; finally the story, *Eva* and *The Sacred Fire*, a legend with a motif from mediæval Siena. The sharp attacks on home radicalism in most of these books provoked one rejoinder after another. Georg Brandes[1] fastened the epithet *renegade* upon me—"a little perverse renegade." Carl Ewald took it up and gave a lecture against me in the Students' Association, with the title "Renegades." He also frequently wrote against me, first in *Tiden*, later (after I had become editorial secretary of that paper) in *Politiken*. Stuckenberg directed a sharp attack against *Our Lady of Denmark*. He found fault with the "ugly self-revelation" in the book, condemned Herman Ronge's "brutal self-contempt" and "terrifying self-satisfaction," his "cynical lust of power, which would

[1] See note Vol. 1, p. 55.

force his own mistakes, his own sins, upon other souls." altogether found the book "uncharitable, unmusical, indelicate" (*Illustreret Tidende*, Aug. 4, 1900). Amalia Skram[1] translated Garborg's[2] *Den bortkomne fadern*[3] with a preface directed against me. When occasion offered Johannes V. Jensen returned my smarting taunts; young poets who had been amongst my friends in the days of *The Tower* (Mylius Erichsen, Louis Levy) turned their backs on me. That diabolically clever journalist of the mid-day Press, Johannes Hansen, slashed gaily at my conscience, which was as tender as an abcess. Finally, in March 1901, Sven Lange turned on his guns with a series of articles in *Politiken* entitled "The Enemies of Life." The first of these enemies was, I think, Pastor Schack, of the Church of the Holy Spirit, the next was myself. And Sven Lange did not spare us.

He began with a confrontation of Christianity, especially Catholicism, with the modern idea about life. Of the first he said that its "hard and cruel commandments crushes down those who feel guilty, closing sternly and firmly about their penitence. Thereupon it gives them *peace*. At the same time its worship of saints, which troubles the senses, opens ventilators for their inflamed imagination.

"Compared with this old and experienced religion, which is so exactly calculated to meet the deepest and most hidden instincts of human nature, modern paganism is still fairly powerless. It demands infinitely more of man; that is, those qualities which are most rarely found in him: the firm will, the calm recognition, the perfect human dignity from which goodness and justice spring freely and naturally. It is the religion of the strong, But how many are still the strong? How few they are compared with the hosts of voluptuaries and weaklings, of the simple-minded and bewildered who in these days, seek their way, trembling and groaning, into Catholicism,

[1] See footnote Vol. 1, p. 74. [2] Ibid. [3] "The missing father."

in greater and greater numbers every day. Amongst them Johannes Jörgensen is now raising his venomous little head."

Now came the attack, not upon my abilities, not upon my ideas, but upon my character, upon my moral quality. Lange wrote about me: "His small, dry and self-satisfied heart shows itself in all its nakedness. It is impossible to discover any other result of his Christianity. For instead of love he shows hate, instead of humility self-righteousness, instead of joy, venom. All his Christianity is only revenge. Because he was too weak himself to follow the men of free-thought they become 'false prophets'—because he is vicious himself their teaching becomes 'set phrases on the painted cheeks of vice.' At the same time that his poetic powers grow feebler from one book to another, his venom, his hate, his self-righteousness increase. But this is only natural: the forest takes its revenge, life cannot be abused with impunity."

"If I were you I would write an article entitled 'The Conversion of Sven Lange,'" said Mogens Ballin, who had brought me the article. In reality it was quite unwarrantable now to mobilise against me the morals which at other times they had "tossed in a blanket," and whose values they now wanted to render "fluid." Recently Stuckenberg had proclaimed as the trinity in which he believed: "the true, the beautiful and *the evil.*" So much, one would think, would also be intended in the programme "beyond evil and good"—so much, if not more! And we were probably all "renegades"—for we had all denied the faith in which we had grown up, whether it were Judaism or Christianity. I saw just as well as Mogens that the old morals, once so despised, were now used as weapons of attack, because only in this way, or only in this particular way, could they strike me. I also saw the contradiction between Lange's attack on Catholicism as a religion of the in-

stincts and "an inflamed imagination," and the demand for "charity," "humility" and "joy," as the fruits of such a religion.

But I saw above all that Sven Lange, *nolens volens*, testified to Christianity as *the source of all virtues and of all goodness*, that his article did but repeat the words of the apostle: "Let everyone who speaks the name of Jesus Christ cease from all unrighteousness," and that he was therefore attacking me as the demons attacked the hermits of old in the desert—the demons *spoke the truth*.

Because this was so I *did not answer*. In vain did the impulse to self-defence urge itself upon me; in vain did my polemical spirit form contrasting effects such as these: that what was in the radical headquarters called "deliverance from worthless prejudice," was now in the same place called "leading a vicious life." (Words about me by Georg Brandes: "At the time when I knew him, Jörgensen was leading a vicious life.") I understood that even the best self-defence would be of no use, and that even if all the Sven Langes were reduced to silence the accuser within me would not be silent. Ever since the night-visions in Assisi he had not ceased to speak, either day or night, and often I still felt as if I were hanging over that terrible abyss, hovering over the depths from which arose the hot breath of the bottomless flame.

There was another accuser who walked by my side in human form, who knew me better than anyone and who now declared that Sven Lange *was right*. "He has not said a word too much. That is what you are like! I am filled with horror over you and I shudder at being bound to you!"

It was night when these words were spoken, and I left my house. In Stenosgade the church was still open; I walked slowly up the aisle on the south side and sat down under the solitary gas jet that was generally lit at night. I was alone; the church was in semi-darkness,

empty and quiet. Above my head the gas-jet murmured softly, before the high altar the tiny flame crackled in the sanctuary lamp. Then it overwhelmed me, the deep horror of perdition! I gazed into myself and saw nothing but darkness and emptiness. I was without faith and without goodness, a creature consisting of nothing but malice, hardness and love of sensual pleasures. I could not kneel, could not pray, I only sat dully staring towards the altar of the Blessed Virgin. The carved statue, the gilding of which gleamed faintly in the gloom—that was the Blessed Virgin, the Mother of God, Mary! I did not believe in Mary. I did not believe in anything. I had never believed in anything. I looked up at the high altar and felt as if some power issued from it, as if a strong, irresistible hand *removed* me. I understood that it was Jesus who would not tolerate my presence—and I went out. Without genuflecting to the altar, without taking holy water at the door. Went. "And it was night."

Four days passed away. I came home, I went out, I ate my meals, but it was as though there were a wall about me behind which I heard the others. "I believe in nothing, and yet I feel that truth and happiness are there. But they are for others, for those who are worthy of them—not for me." "All my transgressions surround me like lions. I have been unjust and contemptuous, sneering and spiteful against Protestants and freethinkers alike. And despair draws me like an abyss; I could shriek out my unrighteousness before the whole world, curse myself, curse my fate, curse God and die, howling with despair." (March 24.) "The accuser within me continues to speak to me: 'Yes, you believe in nothing! Sven Lange is right—you are a false Christian! Throw off the mask, be what you are according to your nature, do your duty and go to the hell for which you are destined.' Or thus: 'The others are right. The others are on the good path, you are on the wrong one. He

whom you call God is really Satan. He whom you call Satan is really God. And the more you believe you are "saving" yourself, the more deeply you are damning yourself!' And now came the last temptation: 'Leave all that pious nonsense alone! You are alive, you are still young, you can enjoy life. Return to your former friends; they will forgive you; everything will be as it was before and the gift of poetry will return to you' " (March 25).

But this last inducement was too plain; all at once I understood with whom I had to deal. I perceived that I was first to be brought to despair of the possibility of ever becoming good—and then to be led back to the old wild paths of liberty. It was Veduskogin[1] enticing me again, and from its sombre depths came the sweet warbling of the birds of sin . . . .

This happened on the evening of the fourth day, and again it was in the church in Stenosgade. With sudden resolution I left my seat and went over to the other side of the church where the bells are for calling the priests. I pressed the electric button against the name of Brinkmann. And when I walked back to my seat I was able to bend my knee before the high altar and the sacred Treasure upon it; the spell was broken. Then Father Brinkmann came, surprised that I had called him in particular. But he was the one I needed, and he found the right words. He reminded me of Saint Theresa's teaching, that the spirits of darkness never begin by an inducement to do wrong—on the contrary, they particularly speak on behalf of virtue, and everything they say is only just and right. Their tactics are always the same—first to make one anxious, as if one were not on the right road; then to bring one to despair, as if salvation were impossible—finally, to lead one back to the deserted, evil paths. "And even if the devil is right and you are no saint, but a sinner, what then? Can the devil

[1] See Vol. 1, p. 93.

make you less of a sinner, is he not more likely to make you a greater one? Accept being a sinner, being bad, being an outcast among men—but do not on that account give up Jesus! He who is good binds himself firmly to the Heart of Jesus that he may become really good. And he who is bad—and most of us are, including that gentleman in *Politiken*—he binds himself twice as firmly to the Heart of Jesus that he may become only a little better. And besides—is there anyone else, do you think, who can help us to do so? Not that I know of. Therefore, if the devil comes back—as he is almost sure to do—and again wants to make you believe that you are an enemy of mankind or of progress or culture or life, just say to him, 'I know nothing about all that. I only know that I will strive to be good. I also know that this does not please you. But I tell you once for all that I will go on and I will persevere, even if I am never to succeed in becoming good—nay, even if I knew that I was to be damned for ever!' Speak like that to Satan, and he will flee from you like a whipped cur!

"But upon you I impose this injunction: from to-day and *for the next ten years* not to answer any attack. We are again drawing near the time when the Church recalls to mind how Our Lord went up to Jerusalem to begin His Passion, and when the Samaritans would not receive Him, because 'His face was set as though He would go to Jerusalem.' Last Sunday was Passion Sunday, and the Mass began with the words of the old Psalmist, *Judica me, Deus*, 'Judge me, O God, and distinguish my cause from the nation that is not holy.' '*Discerne causam meam de gente non sancta.*' Let that saying strengthen you. When you feel tempted to answer an attack, when your blood boils up, and the thirst for revenge is burning, then just say: '*Judica me Deus.*' Put yourself under the judgment of God—He will deal justly with your cause."

After confession I still stayed in the church. I saw Father Brinkmann step out of the confessional, pray for a

moment or two at the altar of Our Lady and then go across the nave, his white profile calmly and delicately outlined against the gloom. Then he went into the sacristy; I heard him opening and closing doors and going away into the quiet presbytery. Up above in the little oratory on the first floor, which has a window overlooking the choir, lights were being lit soon after, and the muted, soothing sound of the priests and lay brothers saying night prayers began.

Then after the long period of torment, peace descended upon me. The feeling of being separated from all others, separated from the world, continued, but in a different way. I thought of Sven Lange, of all attacks, with an infinite calm. It was as though all the threads between mankind and myself had been severed, I felt neither fear nor hate, nor any other feeling. There was, as it were, a wall about me and I was in perfect peace inside this wall, with no other thought than that of living for myself and for God, that is, for God's victory over me. In my diary I wrote: "Hitherto I have reacted more against the others than against myself, i.e., hated rather than loved. Now I am beginning to hope that I may be able to become a Christian. And so much do I fear the fanaticism of my thought and the strange, almost involuntary mercilessness in my manner, that I would rather never write anything more, but keep my hands for myself, folded and bound.

To realise this ideal was impossible, in view of the fact that I had to live by my pen. But so far as I know I did not answer any attack during the ten years from 1901 to 1911.

II

In May 1901, as a result of an application to the Ministry of Education, recommended by Jens Busk, I received three hundred kroner for a journey abroad, and I de-

cided to go to Belgium. I should have preferred Italy, but how far can one go for three hundred kroner,[1] even if one's kind publisher adds another two hundred francs? I travelled alone. My wife went with the children and the nurse to Silkeborg to spend the summer there. On the morning of May 24th, then, I sat in the Gedser train, the dear Gedser train with the fine, new third-class carriages (for one travelled third). The thick packet of circular-tour tickets contained the names Berlin, Köln, Liège, Namur, Dinant, Tournay, Bruxelles, Ypres, Bruges—and of course Bruges was the real goal of the journey. Holger Drachmann's[2] Brügge of the time when *he* broke out and settled *his* accounts with Radicalism, Holger Drachmann's Brügge—and the Liège of Christian democracy where Monseigneur Doutreloux and Godefroid Kurth were fighting the good fight for Christian social ideas. . .

It was close upon Whitsuntide and Berlin was arrayed in her best spring attire. The Saturday before Whitsunday great loads of birch twigs, birch branches and young birch saplings are brought into the German capital and planted in every available place—at the doors, in front of the houses—so that you walk about everywhere in the sweet scent of young birch foliage. At the Stadtbahn the carriages were full of festively dressed Berliners, who were careful to see all the time that their watches were right and talked about connections to Potsdam as if they were going on a long journey—of Berlin women, stout, red, tightly clad in white, in smart hats and gloves, talking with languishing sentiment about the natural beauties of Grünewald or telling each other about the prattle of the children they had had to leave at home.

My first walk was to the new Kaiser Friedrich Museum and to the old Italian masters—Lorenzetti, Angelico—

[1] About £16.
[2] See footnote, Vol. 1, page 55.

the pictures from *my* Italy. "You look into quiet rooms where women are lying ill or monks are praying. Angels visit those at prayer, saints heal the sick. You see red roofs round small court-yards with a solitary tree in the middle; a small belfry is outlined against a golden sky; through an open door you look out upon a garden where the sun is shining upon green branches." (The Diary, May 25.) "No one has painted the supernatural like Fiesole. You have only to see how the angel with the Cross, on the picture of the Last Day, hovers motionless, as though suspended in the golden light from Christ in the halo. This solitary angel in the midst of the downward rays of golden light represents the whole terrible reality of the judgment. And how Fiesole understands, too, how to make blessedness comprehensible. You have but to look at the hosts of the blessed in front on the right, or the ascending saved ones on the left. With uplifted hands they mount up on steps of blue clouds in the more and more intense light of gold. Lowest down you see a cardinal and a pope in a long red cope and white tiara. An angel receives them both, and it is wonderful how their bearing expresses the 'At last! At last!' of redemption, the salvation attained after long waiting; the secure, blissful surrender as though with a long sigh of joy: the crown of justice has been kept for me!"

From accustomed art the road led to the accustomed restaurant, "Zum Franciskaner" in Friedrichstrasse under the "Stadtbahn." The waiter of two years ago was still there, recognised me, remembered my family and the incident, "Bitte, ein Glas Wasser." I sat in the same place as then, in one of the small compartments by the window, and soon fell into that peculiarly German mood of Rathskeller and Rhenish. Outside the bottle-green windows the hoofs of horses rattled over the sun-heated asphalt, but here, within, beneath the brown, vaulted Renaissance ceiling there was a peaceful shade. Here

and there in the other compartments there were couples or parties—I heard a scrap of conversation amongst a trio having lunch, two gentlemen and a lady. First gentleman: "Your husband is dead, Madam?" The lady's voice: "Yes, he is." Second gentleman to the first: "You can have her now!" Jovial laughter, and presently in the hearty voice of the second gentleman: "So long as *the others* die, I am quite content!"

After a cup of coffee in the traditional Café Bauer I strolled in the Leipzigerstrasse and wondered at seeing how little the German capital, here, at any rate, in the commercial part, had a German look. From pavement to roof the palatial shop buildings shone resplendent with signboards and names—names in gold and names in colours, names in glow-lamps which were already lit. Everywhere I encountered Jewish names, Goldstein, Silberstein, Rubin, Rosenhain, Levy, Levysohn, Lövinsohn, Lamm, Hirsch, Rosenheim, Vollgold, Nathan, Behrens, Marcies, Meyersohn, Bennigsohn, Israel, Isaac, Jacob, Jacobi, Jacoby . . . It began to dawn upon me that day, and it has since become luminously clear to me, that Germany is *the Jewish great power* in Europe. Recently Björnstjerne Björnson had made his famous, or notorious, Pan-Germanic speech at a banquet at which there were ten or twelve Germans and seventy sons of Israel. The subsequent years were to see a continuously deeper "Judäising" (with this term I translate the Jew, Weininger's expression *Verjudung*) of the German community, of German commerce, German literature, the German Press, the German Drama and of the German spirit altogether. Until the blending of the two races, Jewish and Teutonic, at last seems to be so complete that a German author of Hebrew descent, who at the time of the outbreak of the world-war was staying in Siena, thought he could say to me: "But, after all, you know, *we Teutons* must keep together!"

Joined by a German friend of the d'Auchamps, Herr

Franz Peters, editor of the Centre newspaper, *Germania*, I went on Whitsunday to Treptow, a holiday resort of the citizens of Berlin. An old abbey, built on an island out in the middle of a small lake, had been turned into a modern restaurant. The ferry boats that took visitors across were tastefully named, "Beelzebub," "Pilatus" and "Herodes"; a confessional had been transformed into a telephone-box. Everywhere there were crowds of festively dressed people in light summer clothes and small tables at which there was a lavish drinking of beer.

In Berlin I studied, by myself, the Catholic life so richly developed there, as seen in the churches. Hitherto I had made acquaintance only with the oldest of the Catholic churches in the capital, the "Hedwig Kirche" mentioned by Heine. I now discovered that there were no less than twenty-two Catholic churches and chapels in Berlin, and visited some of them—the Dominican Church in the Moabit quarter, the new Windhorst Memorial Church in Wilmersdorf, the Chapel of the Sisters of Saint Elisabeth in Frankfurterstrasse. I did not get into touch with any Catholic personalities.

From Berlin I went on to Cologne, where I had a letter of introduction from Bishop von Euch to Dean Berlage (the well-known art historian), and with profound joy at seeing it again I stood once more in the stone forest of the Cathedral; once more I went into the forest amongst the mighty trees and beheld the violet light over the vaultings of the chancel. I went to Santa Maria in Kapitol and now understood its resemblance to Roman basilicas; I went to St. Gereon, St. Aposteln, St. Ursula. For some hours I was again under the spell of Cologne.

Then I came to Aix,[1] one evening, when all the bells were ringing, and the next morning I went to Mass in the Cathedral (that strange hybrid of a Gothic cathedral and a Romanesque round church). The Mass was said in the

[1] Aix-la-Chapelle.

Gothic choir ; above the altar was reared a huge crucifix with the arms of the Crucified close together, the body extremely contorted, a great deal of blood streaming from the wound in the side. Before this crucifix knelt a couple of hundred people, young and old, men and women, refined elderly gentlemen, matrons and schoolboys, all deeply absorbed in prayer. Outside in the cloisters next to the church numerous others of the faithful were engaged in making the stations of the Cross, quietly, seriously, solemnly.

After Mass I saw the cathedral, I saw the town hall, I saw what you see in Aix when you have a day at your disposal. Towards evening I sat on a hill above the town and wrote in pencil in my diary :

"Six o'clock on the Salvatorberg. View over Aix and over the hilly, wooded country, dotted here and there with houses, or chequered in the brown and green of fields. The sound of music comes over from the Kuhrhaus, the grasshoppers are singing clearly in the grass, which is full of buttercups ; from one of the many churches in the town below comes a frail ringing, a few short strokes which are familiar to me and which mean that Benediction is being given at this moment. Meanwhile the music from the Kuhrhaus surges up in great waves of sound.

"There are no seats here, but stations of the Cross in stone. I sit down at the foot of one of them—it is the twelfth, the Crucifixion. And while the birds and grasshoppers sing and the air fans me with cool, light breezes, scented with hay and herbs, and I hear the children playing down below in Aix, I hold a mental and interior review of myself.

"My God, Thou who lettest the gentle breezes blow about me and the fragrance of the grass delight me—who am I, what am I ? I am troubled at the thought of it, I dare not behold myself—as though I were a basilisk, which must die when it sees its own image.

"The bells are ringing down below, they go on ringing, at last they all ring and I think of Innsbrück, of how little we gained from that beautiful town, that Catholic town. It is now nearly two years since we were there. The years pass, nothing comes back. My God, let not my life, then, become a series of lost opportunities for good!"

"The faith of the Catholics of Aix, genuine, honest, showing itself in manifold ways, as it were excludes me. Am I only imitating the faithful—do I not believe? Ah, if I believed my aspirations would mount up to great heights, and sitting in a wine tavern, going to a café, strolling in Hohestrasse, my glance enjoying the worldly traffic of the street would not please me so much! My God, grant me at last to turn round and to turn inwards; grant me to live for Thee, to believe and to love! Do not weary of me, do not leave me! Strengthen my love for Thee, for Thy Church, for the beauty of art and nature, and so lift up my heavy, earthly heart to heavenly desires!"

This prayer, with which I conclude here, is one of those in the Litany of All Saints; in further confirmation it is quoted in Latin a little lower down on the page: *Ut mentes nostras ad coelestia desideria erigas, te rogamus audi nos.*

There are some who, when reading an outpouring of the heart like the above, will find me extremely naïve and think that my self-reproaches are suspiciously reminiscent of Queen Dagmar's.[1] Now, so many years after, I can see quite well, too, that I was under an illusion, and that the good Catholics of Aix, their Mass over and their prayers well said, most probably did not despise either the wine tavern or the café, nor when they went to Cologne, would they deny themselves a stroll on the Hohestrasse or a glance at the fair "Kölnerinnen."

[1] See footnote, page 85.

I have since then had the experience of a carnival in Cologne and a German Catholic congress or two.

But at the beginning of the twentieth century I was still one of the poor in spirit, one of those naïve and credulous *dupes* to whom the Gospel promises the kingdom of heaven. Deeply rooted in my soul were two main ideas : *that all others were better than I and that I was an outcast from humanity*. It is true that when I wrote I could pretend to be in the right, and on the surface of my soul it seemed to me that I was. But in the depths of consciousness—in the abyss of conscience—there it was a different matter. I attacked others, and attacked often, but never without fear and trembling. And one word against my character, against my moral worth, was enough to disarm me, to paralyse my hands. For the loathing of my appearance, the sickness and horror I had felt as a youth when I looked at myself in a mirror—this now returned, intensified in a religious sense, morally deepened. My exterior ugliness seemed to me to be the sign of my interior hideousness—*signum reprobationis in vultu gerens*. In the depths of my being the consciousness burned and stung ineradicably, ineffaceably, inextinguishably (and the experiences of the latest years had abundantly increased it) that I was evil beyond all others, evil to the core ; that I was he whose salvation was almost impossible, the envenomed beast of the abyss, the *basilisk*, of which it is said that when you hold a mirror before it, it dies of horror. . . .

On these spiritual conditions I had to live, I had to work. And no one must be allowed to know anything about it.

III

My first diary of Belgium ! A little book in a stiff, brown cardboard cover, bought one day in Copenhagen sixteen years ago ; on the yellowed pages are written in

pencil the names of Liège, la Sambre, Dinant—those names which are now written in letters of blood in the history of the downfall of Europe!

In Liège, which was my first station, I looked up Godefroid Kurth, then professor of history at the university in that city. I had read his *Origines de la Civilisation chrétienne* and his book at the turn of the century: *L'Eglise aux tournants de l'histoire*. Kurth's friends had said of him that he did not unjustly bear the crusader-knight's name of Godefroid, for there was no great and good cause for which he did not fight. He was a convinced and zealous Catholic, an enthusiastic champion of liberty and friend of the people, with Cardinal Lavigerie a spokesman of the abolition of slavery, with the Bishop of Liège, Monseigneur Doutreloux, an ardent democrat. This beautiful soul was enshrined in a noble appearance; the lofty brow, the large brilliant eyes, the powerful curve of the nose, the large, but well-shaped mouth, the jet-black, silver-sprinkled beard, the even, warm complexion, all contributed to give an entire impression as of a prophet of Israel or a Christian apostle. His figure was tall and imposing, his dress simple, his manner cordial, his handclasp firm, his talk easy and natural.

"I knew you already by appearance and I have read your little book against Georg Brandes," were about the first words Kurth said to me. He showed me an article in the Swiss periodical, *Alte und neue Welt* (I think it was by M. Herbert), with my portrait, as well as a copy of the Flemish translation of *The Truth and Falsehood of Life*. This little controversial piece of writing had been translated into German in 1897 by Countess Henriette Holstein-Ledreborg, who had also translated *Le Livre de la Route* (1898), *The Last Day* and *Parables* (1899). It was the appearance of these various works on the German book-market which had occasioned the article that Kurth had read. The Flemish translation of

The Truth and Falsehood of Life had, on the other hand, been made direct from the Danish by Godefroid Kurth's spiritual kinswoman, like himself an enthusiastic champion of ideals and of the Flemish cause, Mejuffrouw M. E. Belpaire, in Antwerp. An old Belgian priest, Father Blancke, in Ghent, who had at one time been a missionary in Norway and still read Danish, had called Miss Belpaire's attention to the little book and she had translated it for her periodical *Dietsche Warande* (*The Flemish School of Plants*) and had later published it in book form.

I was therefore not a stranger to Godefroid Kurth, and he welcomed me with the outstretched arms of a fatherly friendship. We were soon seated in the garden behind his house with a glass of Moselle before us, and over the German wine the German language came most naturally to our lips. Here in Liège, then, as I sat with him in his garden, Kurth told me about Christian democracy in Belgium. Told me about *les Aumôniers du travail*, that group of priests who live their lives among the twelve thousand workmen in Cockerill's metal works in Seraing—of the trade unions founded by *les Aumôniers*, the benefit funds, the offices for free legal assistance, the co-operative societies, a co-operative bakery with twenty-franc shares payable in ten monthly instalments. Told me about the great Catholic peasant association, *Burenbond*, about the arts and crafts school *Ecole Saint Luc* and about the architect, member of parliament and university professor, Helleputte, who was the soul of these institutions. Told me about Abbé Mellaerts and Abbé Pottier, about the social congresses in Liège and *les syndicats d'agriculture*, about Arthur Verhagen in Ghent and *la ligue démocratique*. . . . It was a new world that Kurth opened up to me in all this—my pencil struggled wildly with all the new names and the unfamiliar terms, and I felt strongly that here I had before me the realisation of a part or a great deal of that of which I had dreamed in *Our Lady of Denmark*. I asked

Kurth about the "Flemish Movement," of which we had heard through Drachmann; he reproached it with exclusiveness. I mentioned a couple of names which at that time were taking up a good deal of space in the daily Press, the two Socialist and apostate priests, Däens and Charbonnel. Godefroid Kurth's Oplympic countenance grew stern, and he said, with the finality characteristic of him, "They are mean and feeble natures, who will never achieve anything." And across our talk rang every quarter the clear chimes of the adjacent church of Saint Jacques.

Kurth invited me to spend the night in his house, and before dinner we walked the few steps over to the bishop's palace to call upon Monseigneur Doutreloux. Friendly footmen conducted us to the friendly Bishop, to whom I was introduced as a fellow-Christian democrat. "The movement is as yet only in its infancy," said the Bishop, adding with a smile, "We have against us what my excellent friend, Kurth, has recently called *les coffres-forts en délire!* All the safes are in a rage; Mammon has mobilised his entire army. There are men in Liège who consider themselves good Catholics, and who will hardly any longer bow to a Christian democrat, hardly even though he wears a bishop's cross! We are denounced as revolutionaries, although God knows that what we want is not the upsetting of society. Recently, down in *le Borinage*, one of us was passing the exit from one of the large mines, just as the miners were coming up and going home. He then said to his companion, who happened to be a great employer of labour: "Look at those men; look at the state in which we send them home—black, grimy, with unrecognisable faces and in clothes stiff with coal-dust! Don't we owe them a bath at least before they leave their work, and clean garments in which to come to the mines and leave them? We complain of the breaking-up of family life and of the spread of alcoholism—but where are these grimy men to go

except to the public-house? And what do they learn at the public-house but to curse the society that keeps them down in dirt and darkness and toil, and to curse the religion which gives its blessing to a society so unjust?"

Doutreloux had spoken with increasing emotion, and his voice trembled. "My dear friend," he continued, turning to Kurth, " you remember the answer? *L'ouvrier n'est qu'un cochon, et il le restera toujours!* And it was a Catholic who said those words; he spoke them with the same lips which had perhaps that morning been opened to receive the Body of *Him* who had not where to lay His head! How can it be otherwise but that a workman must *hate* such a religion and *despise* us Catholics as abominable hypocrites? I see—in Belgium as in the rest of Christendom—but one rescue for the Church: Christian democracy. There is a long way to go yet—out of seventeen members for the province of Liège only one is on our side. We are being persecuted on every hand: by the Catholic Conservatives, because we want justice; by the Liberals, because we are Christians; by the Socialists, because we are priests. But we shall conquer in the end, for our thoughts are God's thoughts; our ways are God's ways, and humbly, but in truth, we dare to apply to the Christian democratic movement the words of the apostle: 'The love of Christ constraineth us!'

We knelt before the aged Bishop with the young heart and received his blessing. And we went away silently, through the large, quiet garden, fragrant in the rain that was beginning to fall.

IV

From Liège to Namur. "Red, grey, brown, black slag-hills. Red, blue, yellow, grey, green smoke. Factories, chimneys, blast furnaces, fortress-like looking lime-kilns, from the walls of which workmen look malevolently down at the train. Huge grey rocks, the

haunts of ravens and owls, green forest-clad hills, finally large flower-filled meadows along the banks of the Meuse, where young girls are going about gathering poppies and daisies, and women are gathering linen in from bleaching; everywhere handsome, well-kept peasant farmsteads of white stone with slate roofs." (May 31.)

Namur. "The cathedral of Saint Aubain, a replica of St. Peter's in Rome. A walk about the streets. Through the low-placed windows in the white houses you look into deep, cool rooms with old, large furniture. All the doors are well closed, tall and substantial, and every other brass plate bears the word *Avocat*, *Notaire* and again *Avocat*. Only few people are out this hot afternoon; at one door a gentleman rings the bell; a lady comes out on the balcony above, looks down, the door is opened. I pass by a narrow street with a limestone wall round a large garden, a wealth of green shows above the wall—poplars, sycamores, a dark-red copper beech; there is a strong and sweet scent from within. A Dominican comes towards me and passes on; children are sitting on a doorstep; a big girl is toiling under the weight of a little one; a little boy is scolded by his sister because he has a hole in his knickerbockers. Finally, down to the river (la Sambre), on the road along the bank a horse is slowly towing a coal barge; over on the other side there are fortifications, bastions, towers; at the top, trees against the blue sky."

From Namur to *Dinant*. "You go from the railway station in towards the old part of the town and at a turn of the street you see a marvellously beautiful sight: an old bridge across the river, small houses with verandahs along the river bank on the other side; behind it rises the hill, grey and crowned with a grey castle or old fortress, and below the hill a wondrously beautiful church in early Gothic, built of blue-grey stone, with Romanesque rows of arches and columns. My God,

what beauty is there not in that world which Thy Church has created, and which it protects against modern culture!"

Alas! the protection was but frail! Thirteen years yet and "modern culture"—German steel-and-iron culture—marched devastatingly over the country between the Sambre and the Meuse, laid waste peaceful Belgian happiness and crushed its Catholic beauty. It was in Dinant that the Teuton barbarians, in one of the senseless murderings which they committed in terror (like the terror of a dog when it bites madly in all directions)—it was in Dinant, I say, that the Germans executed—amongst ninety others equally innocent—an infant of three weeks, and Maurice Betemps, who was eleven months old, and Nelly Polet, also eleven months old, and Gilda Genon, who was eighteen months, and Clara Struvay, who was two-and-a-half, and six children between the ages of five and nine, and twenty-two children between ten and fifteen, because they had shot with guns and revolvers at the peaceable German army! It happened in Dinant in August 1914, and there are not only in Germany but in Denmark, people with minds so placidly constituted that they find "it is nothing to get hysterical about." I do not envy such Danes their calmness.

But as yet all that "was hidden from our eyes," and in Namur and Dinant the worthy Belgian sat peacefully at his well-decked table and washed down his roast beef with a glass of Burgundy. I travelled on, and in the evening arrived at a small station in the Ardennes, where I got out to walk up to the great Benedictine abbey of Maredsous, where unknown friends were expecting me. Maredsous is a daughter house of Beuron, built (at a cost of £80,000) by the wealthy Catholic publisher, Desclée, and at that time it was ruled by Dom Hildebrand de Hemptinne, later the Primate of the Benedictine Order. Mogens Ballin had been here with

his wife in 1899 on their wedding journey, and an introduction from him to one of the monks, Dom Urbain Baltus, now brought me hither. It was eight o'clock in the evening when I arrived; the moon was hanging golden over the mountains, a spicy, strong and moist air struck against me as I stepped out of the small station. High up on the mountain side, up in the woods, rose the grey, Gothic walls of the abbey. A porter from the station carried my luggage up the mountain path; birds twittered softly in the hedgerows, a cuckoo kept on calling down in the valley. Then I stood before the blue-grey stone façade built in noble Gothic and before the iron-studded door. A friendly guest-father opened it, and after a short evening meal (for a monastery the hour was late), I was taken through long, dark corridors and up some stairs to my room. I was in a monastery, and the wondrous peace of a monastery again enfolded me.

I arranged my belongings, then went to one of the two tall, narrow lancet windows with leaded panes and opened it. My room was in the main front; I saw before me the road by which I had come. The sky was grey, only a long way out was there a light streak of the last of the evening glow. A clock struck—I counted nine strokes—the pulse of life was beating now in the big cities! But here it was quiet, quiet, an infinite quiet over all these sleeping mountains and forests.

I lit the lamp on the small table of fumed oak and looked about me in the room. All the furniture was of fumed oak in the Gothic style; besides the table there were two chairs, the bed, a washstand, a wardrobe, a prie-dieu beneath a picture of Saint Benedict, and in the open book in the hand of the great father of monks I read the familiar PAX. And clearer still than at Beuron, more clearly than ever, I understood the monastery, not as a religious mood, but as a civilising power. The aim of history, the aim of God, is a greater and greater law-

abidingness, order, obedience, *peace*, and through it growth. The devil's element is a loathing of law, discontent with order, rebellion, and through it, destruction. God is the Master Builder, the Eternal Architect —the devil is the troll who comes at night and pulls everything down. God's object is a cosmos that is to be; the devil's delight is the old chaos. Under the guidance of Christ humanity advances from chaos to cosmos, and the monastery is and has always been the barracks for the vanguard troops of this advance. The monastery is the spire and pinnacle of Christianity, the cross-flower on the cathedral built by God.

With such thoughts as these I undressed and went to bed. I left the window open to the light summer night, crickets chirped in the monastery wall, in the woods below a nightingale was singing.

V

At the time when I visited Maredsous the community consisted of forty-five fathers and sixty lay brothers. Besides the divine office, which is the first duty of a Benedictine, the fathers were engaged in study and teaching. The latter was of two kinds, one for the young monks, who after a course of three years pass an examination in philosophy, the other for the pupils in the boarding-school connected with the monastery. The lay brothers worked in house and garden, in the kitchens and on the farm, in the stables and fields, for an abbey like Maredsous is like a large proprietary farm, with everything belonging to a property of that kind. Benedictine life is family life, except that the family is not increased by propagation, but by accretion from outside, and nothing human is foreign to the monk save one thing: the love between man and woman. But owing to this very exception it is possible for the monk to devote his whole life and all his powers to his work.

Moreover, he has no anxieties about ways and means, consequently there is no place where the workers are more persevering and more disinterested than in a monastery. Nor is there anywhere greater joy, for as a rule a monk is gay, with the gaiety of a child or a soldier. Like a child and like a soldier, he has only to do his duty, attend to his work and leave the rest to God and his superiors. Ought he not, then, to rejoice?

In any case, one would have to go far and search long to find a more brimming and joyous manner than that of Dom Urbain Baltus, who came to see me the next morning. The small, thick-set man, sturdy and still young (the two clipped lines of the tonsure were barely visible in the black hair) fairly bubbled with life. Taking my hand, he pulled me after him into his cell, which he found disarranged and began to put in order himself. It was done with the speed of half a gale, sheets and pillows flew about his ears, the water in the basin was emptied more or less into the pail, the duster whirled over the writing-table and along the bookshelves—in five minutes everything had been put straight, and Dom Urbain placed me in an armchair by the window, seated himself opposite to me and began a discussion about Schopenhauer's philosophy. For Dom Urbain was professor of philosophy for the students in the monastery and was to give a lecture at nine o'clock on the pessimist of Frankfurt. Meanwhile he was continually starting up from his chair and looking out of the window to see whether it was not one of his penitents who was going towards the door of the church opposite. Then he questioned me about Mogens Ballin and Marguerite, who had both paid him a visit two years earlier (Mogens had stayed in the monastery, his wife with the nuns in the convent of Maredret, close by), and fell into talk of reminiscences of Italy, which he too, loved, ending, as he sat on the edge of the bed, in humming the pathetic song about the little Savoyard chimney-sweep: *Spazzacamino, Spazza-*

camino ! But when he came to the verse about how the little Savoyard returns to his native village and finds that his mother is no longer living, and her grave in the familiar churchyard has no flowers—*non un' fil d'erba, non un' fiorellin*—then Dom Urbain's voice broke, there were tears in his eyes and he said : "My mother is living, but she is very old. When you get to Brussels you must go out and see her."

Dom Urbain introduced me to some of the other monks—above all to the Abbot, then to the historian, Dom Ursmar Berlière, a friend of Kurth and author of a comprehensive Belgian monastic history ; to the philologist, Dom Remacle, who entertained me about his campaign to introduce mediæval Latin instead of the classical into the Belgian colleges ; finally to the young Dutch painter and sculptor, Frère Adalbert Greissnich, and his friend and fellow-artist, Herr Weiss, a German living in the monastery as an oblate. The youthful Brother Adalbert was a friend of Verkade, and we immediately became good friends. At the age of fifteen he had become a monk and had lived here and there in various monasteries ; in consequence of this he spoke an oddly mixed language, which was generally called *la langue du Frère Adalbert*. He had read a great deal, and in our first talk we discussed modern literature, from Spinoza to Tolstoi. We strolled about in that part of the monastery garden which was allotted to guests, beneath the white blossoms of strongly perfumed acacias, or we inspected the farm buildings of the monastery, where jovial, bearded lay-brothers in black, shiny habits and wearing rustic straw hats on their monastic heads, were going about as though in a Noah's ark of animals clean and unclean. The poultry yard alone contained 315 inhabitants ! The brother in charge of the pig-styes told me proudly that everything was arranged on Danish models, and I learned there for the first time that Danish pigs live in apartments lined with white glazed tiles, and

provided with steam heating and electric light. Frère Adalbert paid but little attention to the brother's explanations, being absorbed in the contemplation of a large sow, which was fixedly staring at him with its small grey eyes. "*Das Auge dieses Thieres sagt mir ungemein viel.*" [1] he said as we came out. "*Es ist wie eine gefangene Seele, die mich verzweifelt anschaut!*" [2]

"Quatsch !" said Herr Weiss, who accompanied us on this round. For Herr Weiss was not sentimental—Herr Weiss was a small, lean and middle-aged German, an architect by profession (if I remember rightly), a humourist in temperament. After having tried the world in various ways, Herr Weiss had found a refuge with the the Benedictines in Maredsous and had become an oblate in the monastery—a position in the Benedictine Order which about corresponds to that of a tertiary amongst the Franciscans and Dominicans. He had his own spacious room in a wing of the monastery, and there had a great many books, photographs of Italian and Flemish art, all kinds of mementoes from his journeys here and there in Europe. He was dressed as a layman, could leave the monastery even for some length of time, and thus lived a rather pleasant life on the border of two worlds. At present he was busy with the decorative preparations for the approaching feast of Corpus Christi, and both Frère Adalbert and I helped him to the best of our ability. One of his schemes of decoration consisted in arranging a sort of carpet in front of the church in patterns of sand of various colours, which could be obtained in abundance in the soil of the district. Herr Weiss had sketched a design showing the disposal of the colours ; it was drawn on the gravel on an enlarged scale, and we now all three set to work at filling out the pattern with red sand and white sand, yellow sand, brown sand, greenish sand, and sand that

[1] " The eye of this animal tells me an uncommonly great deal,"
[2] " It is like an imprisoned soul looking at me in despair ".

was quite black. "But what exactly does your design mean?" asked Frère Adalbert. "It is symbolistic," was the answer. "What does it symbolise then?" "If I could explain that I should no longer be a symbolist," declared Herr Weiss imperturbably. A little while after we heard him remark, as he contemplated the nearly finished work: "*Alles Menschenwerk hat eine Ende, wie Kirchenvater Schiller sagt!*"[1] Some time later he explained to us that the morrow was sure to be "the most beautiful feast of Corpus Christi that this century had seen as yet" (it was the first, as it happened). He was an enthusiastic reader of Hansjakob, especially because that author had always sprinkled his writing "with plenty of peppercorns for the French." We talked later about the great procession that was to take place on the feast day, about the large number of banners and the candles. "*Ach, die Kerzen! Gehen Sie mir mit den Kerzen!*" (I should translate the South German phrase *Gehen Sie mir*, as something like this "Pooh, your candles!" or, "Get along with your candles!") "*Wenn das Hertz nicht brennt, brennt die Kerze nur für die Katze!*[2]"

Nevertheless, I saw Herr Weiss as one of the most devout in the procession, carrying a huge candle in one hand and a rosary in the other. Afterwards I met him in the garden, we exchanged the obligatory jesting greetings, which he enjoyed: "*Wie geht's, Herr Weiss?*" "*Oh, zwischen schlecht und elend!*" Then he grew serious, changed over to French and said: "When you think carefully about it, the Fête-Dieu is one of the greatest wonders in existence! Once, nineteen hundred years ago now, a man, a human being, took a piece of bread and said, '*This is my body.*' And those who were present believed Him and received the bread as what He said it was. And they passed on His word; passed on the

[1] All the work of man comes to an end, as that father of the Church, Schiller says.

[2] When the heart does not burn, the candles burn only for the cats!

word about the bread, the word said over the bread. Down through the ages the word continued to sound: '*This is my body!*' and the ages continue to believe it. We believe it as our fathers believed it, as our children will believe it. And we kneel down and adore as our fathers knelt, as our children will kneel! Is it not a marvel? And is it not either the extreme of human madness—or the highest human wisdom? I thought of that this morning as we walked along over our sand carpet and trod out the pattern—here we go, here we sing, here we burn incense, here we burn candles, and here we scatter flowers, all in honour of the little, round white Piece of Bread, which I saw there, a few yards in front, carried in the golden monstrance by the two silk-gloved hands of the Abbot! I looked at the Host, which we believe is God Himself—and I looked at those who sank on their knees as we approached, as though mown down by a scythe—I looked at the faith in all the faces, at the simple, unquestioning trust and confidence in all the eyes. I looked up at the blue sky and I thought: 'Thou Eternal up there, Thou canst not have the heart to let us be so thoroughly mistaken! It *must* be the truth—it *is* the truth—Thou *art* here—*this is Thy body!*'"

VI

From Maredsous back to Dinant ("supper in a cheap tavern near the church; the rain is falling into the greenish-grey water, bells are ringing, people in pointed hoods are walking across the bridge"). From Dinant to Namur. From Namur to Charleroi—"Slag-hills, iron scrap-heaps, chimneys, corrugated iron buildings, bridges, cranes, red boilers—*on ne sait plus quoi—des gares tonnent, c'est Charleroi.*" From Charleroi to Mons, from Mons to Tournay. Between Mons and Tournay a workman gets in, he is half-drunk and talks excitedly

about the slavery of workmen's lives, and says that he has taken care to get his son into a better position. A gentleman in the carriage begins to talk with him; says a few words against alcoholism; as an argument employs *le bon Dieu*. "*Le bon Dieu*—have you seen him?" "No—." "Well, neither have I!" And he clenches his teeth in the close-shut mouth of his Bismarck face, and as he looks out of the window up at the sky with his blue, tired eyes he repeats once more, contemptuously, "*Le bon Dieu*!"

"6.30 p.m. Arrival at Tournay. Saw the cathedral from the outside, for it is already closed. Supper at a tavern. Evening devotions in a small church in *la grande Place*. On the way home I stood a short while on the bridge that spans the river. The dusk was falling rapidly, trees and white houses were reflected, bats were darting about low down over the water. Lovers were passing by. Is not the world everywhere the same? How lovingly did not the maid at the inn play with the baby, and big brother kiss little brother! Everywhere people are sitting in front of cafés, taking an evening stroll or chatting in the doorways—everywhere and always the life of man is the same. . .

"June 11. The windows in the chancel of the cathedral. That deep blue, violet and red, that translucent green and pearly white that one finds only in old church windows. At St. Nicholas a deserted square in which the grass grows behind the iron railing round the grey church—the same tall grass, already yellowed by the summer, that I used to see as a boy at Slipshavn. Tall sorrel grows along the foot of the church wall and behind a jutting chapel stand large trees, tossing and soughing restlessly in the wind.

"Amongies. During a stop I get out of the train and go up to the church. It is in a chilly Renaissance style; before the altar stand three dreadfully decked-out dolls on barrows for use in a procession; some glass lanterns

with half-burnt candles stand outstretched from the altar. And yet Jesus is present here in the Sacrament of the Altar, in the midst of this hideousness and lack of taste.

"On the way to Courtrai three 'Sisters' get in, three Franciscans with a whole troop of little Flemish girls, ten or twelve of them, all completely alike, with the same greyish-yellow hair brushed straight back, the same round foreheads, round, grey-blue eyes, snub noses, rosy cheeks and small red mouths. A little one is petted by all the others, gets a picture-book to look at, finally is taken on the lap of one of the Sisters.

"Ypres. The Cloth Hall. The roof is like a whitish-grey mountain-side, like a slope of slate. On the top of *le beffroi* sit eight golden eagles, spreading their wings to the eight winds, and from the highest point of the spire springs the dragon of Ypres."

From Ypres straight on next morning to Bruges. I had not much money, and Bruges was the final goal of my journey. Along the canals with the beautiful names—Spielmansreye, Quai du Rosaire—Holger Drachmann had wandered and felt "as poor as a church mouse," bankrupt of all values, spiritual as well as material. He was the first prodigal son, Karl Gjellerup[1] the second, I the third. Drachmann had forgotten Bruges for the light ale and the fair-haired girls in a sailors' tavern in Antwerp; Gjellerup had gone by way of the Acropolis to a temple of Buddha; it was my destiny to go the whole length of the road, where they had only gone half way.

At first Bruges did not make any deep impression upon me. I arrived in pouring rain, put up at a small hotel and at once went out. The streets seemed to me to be far too modern; the market-place, which I soon reached, likewise, in spite of the town hall and the huge tower. As the rain continued pouring I sought refuge in a small tavern, where the waitress smelt

[1] See footnote, vol. 1, p. 102.

of patchouli said "Yes," and flirted in a corner with an *habitué*. Outside the rain poured in torrents, it grew darker and darker. The market-place lay glistening wet, violet, crossed by black wayfarers. Against a violet sky *le beffroi* rose black, there was a sonorous ringing up above, but so remote, as though smothered in the rainy mist. Further away other chimes answered, and I saw a Gothic spire—it must have been that of the cathedral, Saint Sauveur. I drank my weak ale, heard the scented girl giggling in the corner, looked out at the deserted market-place, where the lamps gave a feeble light, and caught a glimpse of a bandstand. It was one of those moments when life becomes so weirdly real and reality so unspeakably sad—when eternity rings so remotely, so high up, like half-smothered chimes, and down here there is only weak ale if one is poor, strong ale if one has money and a jade who smirks and smiles if one gives a good tip, and otherwise does not care a hang about one. . . .

This mood of oppression was still upon me the next morning when I went out to see Bruges. In vain did I kneel in the cathedral by the gilded shrine of Charles the Good; I felt that here I ought to pray for Denmark, pray for the return of my country to the true faith—and I could not. Dull and deaf I went to St. John's Hospital, to the church of Our Lady, to the museum in *La Poterie* and the *Musée civique*. I had an introduction to a young government official and writer, Dr. Axters—I took good care not to call upon him. Not till late in the afternoon was the spell broken, then the bandage of indifference fell from my eyes and I *saw* Bruges.

It happened on the bridge leading over to the *Béguinage*. In my lethargic state I stopped there and gazed up the canal. There are gardens on either side and green shrubs beneath high, dark walls and houses. Large, blossoming elder bushes lean out from one of these little gardens (it was in June), full-branched willow trees dip

their long tresses in the water. A little further along I saw another bridge, other houses, walls, gables, then the soaring tower of the church of Our Lady. The water was smooth, without a single ripple, with large flakes of green. Swallows were darting noiselessly over it, in under the bridge and back again. An old woman in the black Bruges cloak, with the hood drawn up over the white coif, came up towards me, passed by, walked down the other side, through the gate of the *Béguinage*. As though wakened out of a trance, I followed her, saw above the gateway a statue of Saint Elisabeth of Thuringia, and in the vaulted roof of the gateway a large, old crucifix, solemn and full of pain, which I saluted.

I came into the large green in the middle of the *Béguinage*. It is intersected by paths running lengthwise and crosswise, a great many tall elms sigh in the faint breeze ; round about the green stand the small houses of the *Béguines ;* they are all white with green doors and green-painted window-frames and cross-bars, and they have red or brown-tiled roofs.

I still follow my guide, who crosses over to the church at one side of the large green, follow her inside—a large, light, handsome Renaissance church in a pure style. Here and there a few *Béguines* are already kneeling on the rush-seated prie-dieux, they are dressed like my guide in the black Spanish mantilla with white coifs about their calm, peaceful faces. I too find a prie-dieu and kneel down. A good-looking, half-grown altar-boy comes in and lights the candles on the high altar ; a priest enters, opens the tabernacle and exposes the Blessed Sacrament. Up in the tower a bell rings some short strokes, I hear the *Béguines* coming in behind me, more and still more, at last I am quite surrounded by black cloaks and white coifs. Up at the altar the incense rises towards the monstrance, and over my bowed head ascend the clear voices of women singing *O salutaris hostia*. . . .

And as prayers follow singing and singing follows prayers, the Litany of the Sacred Heart is said in strong, sincere and hearty Flemish,—and after *O salutaris* they sing *Tantum ergo*—the supernatural rises up anew before me in its beauty, its grandeur and its strength. I feel that my lot is cast, that my choice is made for ever, and that I have chosen the better part which shall not be taken away from me.

The thraldom was over—the petrifaction destroyed. The next morning I went to Mass in the chapel of the Precious Blood, built in the Middle Ages as a magnificent shrine for the linen shroud stained with the blood of Christ and brought home from the Holy Land. The treasured relic is always exposed on a sort of ambona; everyone can approach and kiss the glass covering the blood-stained linen. All through the morning Mass is said in the chapel; after the last Mass Benediction is given with the relic while all the people kneel; the censers swing right up and stand up vertically in the acolyte's hands. From *La Chapelle du Saint Sang* I went to the Jerusalem church, in the crypt of which a Flemish crusader had caused a reproduction of the Holy Sepulchre to be built, and in the church of Our Lady I stood before the Madonna of Michael Angelo, a sister to La Pietà in St. Peter's, and wrote in my diary: "Michel Angelo portrayed man as he issued from the hand of the Middle Ages. What beauty, nobility, fineness, gentle grace there is in his Mary! And into what has man been transformed by the later centuries?"

Above all I wandered along the marvellous quays, the Quay of the Rosary, the Green Quay, the Fiddler's Quay, *Dyver*, the Spanish Quay, the Mirror Quay. The diary says: "At 5.30 at Spielmansreye. The dark-green water lies smooth and bright, overshadowed by wide-spreading chestnut trees, elders, drooping willows, rippled only in the wake of a solitary swan. Amongst the foliage of the gardens one catches a glimpse of

yellow houses, gables, red roofs ; huge poplars soar up above the shorter trees. Clothes are hanging out to dry in the gardens, a little water is trickling from a scupper, white down from the poplars sails through the air. The sky is faintly blue, with white clouds." "Later in the evening. A walk along the banks of the motionless canals, spanned by the beautiful arches of old stone bridges. Bats dart about over my head and out across the water, come back—and again dart out. A couple of old women in big black cloaks walk home with a rocking gait ; in a doorway a young girl stands looking up at a star ". . . .

From Bruges to Ghent, where I had two calls to pay ; on the mathematician, Professor Mansion, and on an old, retired missionary to the northern countries, Father Blancke. It was the latter who had called the attention of Mademoiselle Belpaire to my small book, *The Truth and Falsehood of Life*, and it was but courteous to call upon him and thank him. He immediately did all he could for me, and together we visited Oostacker, a place of pilgrimage and a daughter shrine of Lourdes, where the remarkable cure of Peter de Rudder had once taken place. My guide does not seem to have spoken of the matter to me ; anyhow, the diary contains no allusion to that miracle. But the place itself made an impression upon me—the replica of the Lourdes grotto with all the burning candles in front of it, and, as it happened to be a Sunday, the large number of families making a holiday visit to the shrine and spending their leisure in praying before the grotto, many of them, especially young girls of the better class, stretching out their arms to form a cross. A Jesuit was preaching from a rustic pulpit, and again I heard the Flemish tongue in all its hearty melodiousness. I understood only half—it was something about a child who had been blind, but who had now received sight—or had not received it, but had offered his (or her) blindness to God for the welfare of another.

Many were weeping. After the sermon the listeners dispersed; on the way home I saw them seated comfortably in the big gardens of the inns under apple-trees, at white-decked tables, with ale and large loaves in front of them. After piety the joy of life——as when Jesus sat at meat with His disciples, even with publicans and sinners, and only Pharisees cavilled at it.

I had told Father Blancke about my visit to the *Béguines* in Bruges, and he then took me to see the smaller of the two *Béguinages* in Ghent, *le petit Béguinage*. On the way he told me about the arrangements in these peculiar convents, which have endured in Belgium from the Middle Ages down to the present day. Each of the Sisters contributes one thousand francs, which is paid back if she leaves the community; as to the rest, they earn their livelihood by lace-making, sewing or by making rosaries, and while they work they pray for those who have ordered work from them. The time of probation is two years; at the end of this period the novice is a sister and has a vote in the council of the community. Each of the houses forming the *Béguinage* constitutes a small independent state of about twenty persons, managed by a *juffrouw*, but all the *Béguines* in a *Béguinage* ("that which we are now going to visit contains 350") are ruled by a *groot-juffrouw* assisted by two advisers.

Then we reached the red wall of the court of the *Béguines*, rang the bell and were admitted. Father Blancke was well-known in the house, and said a few words on my behalf, so that I could see everything. A Sister took us first to the refectory, where each *Béguine* has, behind her seat, a small cupboard for her table service, napkin, water-bottle, tumbler, etc. Then upstairs to the cells, which were painted white and green, the floor covered with white bass-mats, the bed white, the chairs white with green rush seats, the walls distempered in green. Besides the bed the furniture consisted of a wardrobe, an armchair, three other chairs and a prie-dieu. On the

walls pictures of saints, on the mantel-shelf photographs of relatives, on a shelf beside the bed a holy water font and an alarm-clock. Through the window a view over a green courtyard where linen was spread out to bleach on the grass.

"I can tell you that not many gentlemen are allowed to come into a *Béguine's* bedroom," said Father Blancke in his quaint Danish, and he called my attention to the small cards with inscriptions fastened to the doors of the cells. "They have them instead of name-plates," he explained. I read: "*Alles uit liefde tot Jezus*," and on the next door: "*O goede Jezus, maak dat ik vlamme van liefde to U!*" and on the third: "*Sint Josef, wees myn beschermer!*"

Finally we visited the work-room, where fifteen or sixteen young *Béguines* were assembled under the guidance and superintendence of an older sister. Even from outside we heard joking and laughing, and we entered upon a circle of sparkling eyes, rosy cheeks and firm lips continually rippling in smiles and chatter, and showing, not only the perfect teeth, but also the gums. They were peasant girls and they were enjoying themselves—a rosy-cheeked little novice was laughing so much that she was doubled up over her sewing. There was a slightly embarrassed silence when the priest and the stranger came in, but a few words in Flemish from Father Blancke soon set the fun going again. Before we left we were given a glass of wine and some cake in the portress's room, and I noticed that the sister portress was of the same merry, laughing, sturdy and splendid type of woman. "Yes," said Father Blancke, to whom I told my impressions; "none are healthier, none are happier than the *Béguines*. You can write about that when you get home to Denmark, where they think that women in convents are unhappy. Stuff and nonsense, you can tell them that with my compliments! *Béguines* are happy because they have the best of husbands, that is,

Our Lord and Saviour—they do everything for Him, and in return He and His holy Mother and the dear saints do everything for the *Béguines*. But they don't understand that in Denmark ; no, indeed they don't !"

With this favourite exclamation Father Blancke concluded his account of the *Béguines*. When he perceived my interest in the monastic life he took me the next day to visit the Carmelites in Ghent and showed me one of the cells of these monks. Here a worthy Lutheran might have received a shock, for compared with this poverty a Benedictine cell is luxurious. It is not only that the Carmelite cell is bare, its furniture consisting only of a bed, a table and a chair. It is also without any marks of individuality, the whole question of its furnishing being settled by the rule : above the bed a black cross (not a crucifix), on the table a skull (a real skull), on one wall a picture of *la Sainte Face* (the handkerchief of Saint Veronica), on the others pictures of the Blessed Virgin, Saint Joseph and Saint Theresa. All the cells contain exactly the same objects, exactly the same pictures, the same skull, the same black cross. Those who have entered upon this life may well say that they are "buried with Christ."

Father Blancke and I got on very well together. I moved from my hotel to his house and spent a couple of days under his roof. Amongst the books I had with me he saw one by Fierens-Gevaert with the title *La Pschychologie de Bruges*. To give me pleasure he wanted to buy *La Psychologie de Gand* and present it to me as a surprise but came home somewhat crestfallen, and explained that no "Psychology of Ghent" was to be had ! Meanwhile he disapproved of my purchase of books, as he also did of my spending money on visits to museums. It was therefore not till the last day of my stay in Ghent that I managed to see the "Adoration of the Lamb," and then only because, while I was out for a walk with Blancke, I jumped on to a tram going towards Saint Bavon and so

escaped his control. I knew that he would not try to follow me, as he never spent money on trams, and in the evening, after some grumbling, he forgave me my escapade. When I last saw the old missionary, in 1911, shortly before his death, he did not even remember any longer the trick I had played him, and while I gave my lecture on Saint Francis I had the pleasure of seeing old Father Blancke sitting in the front row and beaming upon me with his most delighted look.

From Ghent to Antwerp, and here I visited the Belpaire family for the first time. On the way to the distant and outlying Marckgravenlei, where the Belpaires lived, I lost my way, with the result that I arrived late, and a number of guests were already assembled and waiting in the drawing-room. The fact that they had waited for me made a great impression upon me—I would have given anything, as I went in, to have been an intelligent and charming Georg Brandes, and not the ugly and stupid creature I really was. Matters grew worse still when I understood that I was to take the place of honour. To hearten myself a little, I drank some wine, too much of it, and suddenly discovered that though I was certainly speaking French more fluently than usual there was not much sense in what I was saying. It seemed to me that significant glances were being exchanged across the table, and as a kind of desperate comfort it was clear to me that I must have made so bad an impression that I should not be invited a second time. After lunch coffee was served outside on the terrace—a broad terrace under an awning with crimson ramblers climbing up the balusters and overlooking the large, luxuriant garden, full of plane trees and sycamores. A young Belgian writer came over to the baluster where I stood hopelessly gazing out, and began to make conversation; I looked at his refined, intelligent face, his black, well-brushed hair, his elegant collar and tie; I listened to his immaculate French with its Parisian "a's," and I felt so

long and unwieldy, I was quite physically conscious of the plainness of my features, my tongue stumbled over the French words like a porter handling luggage far too heavy for him, and I should have liked most of all to go away or simply to disappear, to vanish into nothingness, deliver humanity from my presence. . . .

In the afternoon I went out by steam tram to a Trappist monastery in the village of Westmalle, near Antwerp. It was Father Blancke who had given me this address, and I gladly followed his instructions. In those years the religious life had a strange attraction for me; the stronger perhaps because to me the door to the monastery was practically closed. It is pretty certain that I should not have made a good monk, or that I should have become one of those *gyrovagues*, against whom Saint Benedict's rule speaks so sharply. But I was a good monastery guest, for I adapted myself willingly and gladly to the monastic life and its laws.

The steam tram took me by a paved road through pleasant Belgian villages with well-kept, painted houses. At Wijneghem there was a summer fair with merry-go-rounds and swings; soon after I was in Westmalle. The long, low, monastery buildings, with a belfry above them, stood at some distance from the road. A brown-clad lay brother (the Trappists wear brown when they are lay brothers, white when they are priests) opened the door, with a gesture asked me to come in, and led me, still not uttering a word, to the chapel. The modern and unbeautiful church was divided into two parts by a screen, the larger upper part being for the monks, the smaller lower one for the laity. After a short prayer, back to the parlour, where I heard the first words from the lips of the guest-father. Tall, young and handsome like Saint Placid himself as portrayed by the monks of Beuron, he said a few kind words to me in French, took me to my cell, and then again down to the garden, where he left me alone until supper. I walked

about in it a little; it was late in the afternoon, the evening sun was shedding a golden light on the tall grass of a lawn, and the horsetails growing on the banks of a small pond. Then I came into shady paths under acacias and sycamores, out to a new lawn where azaleas were in bloom. It was calm, flies were buzzing, a bird twittered softly, far away a cuckoo was calling.

At supper I was the fellow-guest of a young and charming business man who was also staying at the monastery. As the Trappists are absolute vegetarians, the menu consisted of rice cooked in water (Rijspap), boiled potatoes, bread and cheese; for us guests an egg had been added. As a beverage there was ale brewed by the Trappists themselves. The attendant lay brother read aloud to us from Thomas à Kempis during the whole of the meal.

After supper we were present at the monks' prayers. It was the last of the seven offices—Compline. From our seats on a platform we could survey the whole church. Down below us the brown brothers knelt in their benches; higher up stood the white fathers in their choir stalls. One of them was seated at the organ. And while the last of the evening glow shed a blood-red light through two round windows in the choir the Abbot began the Introit, with the meditative and penitential slowness prescribed by the Trappist rule: "*De-us in ad-ju-to-ri-um me-um in-ten-de.*" Then came the response just as slowly, solemnly, thoughtfully, with dignity and penitence: "*Do-mi-ne ad ad-ju-van-dum me fe-sti-na.*" After that the wave-beats of the Psalms, familiar to me from Beuron and Maredsous, but here it was as though the waves were heavier and vaster, as if they rolled in from the very ocean of eternity.

Prayers over, back to the garden, where I had a talk with the young merchant, my fellow-guest in the monastery, like that five years earlier at Beuron. He told me that he had at first wanted to become a Trappist, and a

young girl who loved him wished on that account to enter a convent. Then his father died, and as he was the eldest of ten children he had to stay in the world. He was now going to be married and had come to bid farewell to his dreams of the cloister. He told me about the hours he had spent in the old days behind the screen where we had heard compline together: "*J'ai pleuré là bien des fois !* And though I love my fiancée and am looking forward with happiness to the life before me, there is still a sort of homesickness left." He looked up at the bright evening sky where the swallows were circling and their cries high up were the only sound. "*Oh, le silence des Trappistes !*" he exclaimed. "*C'est le silence qui parle.* To one who has learned to think, there is something wonderful in seeing all these big, grown-up men living year in, year out in the most complete silence, entirely cut off from the world, and happy in it ! In the evening, after the *Salve Regina*, as we saw them just now, prostrate in the most absolute silence, *oh c'est beau, c'est beau, beau, beau !*"

It was eight o'clock, a late hour for a monastery and we went to our respective cells. Each cell had, not a number, but a saint's name above the door—mine bore the name of Saint Bruno, the other great founder of a silent Order. The window was placed high up, I had to stand on a chair to look out. I had a view over the quadrangle of the monastery, the green lawns and gravel paths of which filled up the space between the four low, red wings of the cloisters in Romanesque style. It was a light summer night, the courtyard was deserted, two hares were frisking over the grass unconcernedly.

I stepped down from my lookout post and began to read a couple of notices on the wall. They were worded in French and Flemish and included a request to guests not to speak to any of the monks they might happen to meet in the monastery ; and should they do so, after all,

then not to wonder at receiving only a short answer. "Those of the guests," it said further, "who are dispensed from fasting on days and times of obligation, must inform the guest father about it. He will then trust them at their word, without otherwise undertaking any responsibility."

In the expectation that the guests (mostly priests who came to make spiritual exercises) would take part in the prayers said in common, the hours for them were stated. From this I learned that during the summer half-year (i.e. from Easter to September 14th) the Trappists rise at one-thirty a.m., that the first office is sung from two till four, that from four to five those of the monks who are priests say Mass, while the lay brothers make the stations of the Cross or say the Rosary, that from five-thirty to six prayers are again said, from six to nine work is done, from nine-fifteen to ten-forty-five prayers, High Mass and prayers. At eleven there is dinner (morning coffee is served at six-thirty) then a rest from eleven-thirty to twelve-thirty, at one p.m. prayers, after which there is work until five. Vespers begin at ten minutes past five and last until about six, then there is supper and at seven-twenty Compline is sung. And from eight till one-thirty there is sleep, and a silence deeper still than that during the day.

The time-table for the winter half-year is about the same, except that they get up a little later and go to bed a little earlier. (Compline is at six-twenty instead of seven-twenty.) I reckon that on an average a Trappist has seven hours' sleep, seven hours' work and ten hours' prayer.

In order to be present at the first, the longest and most essential of these prayers—Matins and Lauds—I asked to be called next morning at a quarter to two. Chance—that famous "chance" in which I do not believe (having regard to the saying that "not even a sparrow," etc.) wills that it should be St. John's Night, this night which

I spend with the Trappists in Westmalle. Seven years earlier I was in Lucerne on St. John's Eve, and got up early for the purpose of going through the St. Gothard tunnel and for the first time into Italy. And fourteen years back I was with Viggo and Ingeborg Stuckenberg in the Deer Park[1] and drove home with them in the early morning on a crowded brake along the dusty coast road, from which the Sound could be seen looking chilly in the relentless light of the dawn. Ingeborg laughed and chatted with a fair-haired young cousin and suddenly did not know me, while even Viggo's dark-blue eyes had become cool and distant. I said an abrupt good-bye as we got out of the brake at the entrance to the town, a good-bye the discourtesy of which hurt me most; after which I walked home alone to Frederiksberg, foot-sore, ashamed of the silly trumpet from the fair which I carried in my hand, and at which the workmen I met on the way laughed derisively (as I thought). As I passed by the lakes I saw fish leaping in the smooth water; in the early morning calm the trees on the banks were bent down under the weight of the dew. The first sparrows were beginning to chirp, and over on the north side some window-panes were glowing in the light of the rising sun. As I went up the stairs in the house where I lived, dusty, footsore and still with the trumpet in my hand, a red square of light shone in through the window on the landing. The sun was rising now—Viggo and Ingeborg and I might have been sitting at this moment far out on a slope overlooking the Sound and seen the sun rising out of the sea—that had been our plan, but nothing had come of it and it was my fault. I had been foolish, had been aggressive, thought far too much of myself, had trespassed far too much on their friendship. I had forgotten that I was (and would have to be) outside their affairs. And now I went into my lonely room alone, and while the red light of the sun

[1] See vol. I, p. 200.

fell upon the paper I scribbled down some mournful verses about darkness who brands her children with an ineffaceable mark—"for the night marks her children, and darkness knows not forgetfulness"—and went to bed in the heaviest, bitterest sadness.

1888—1894—1901—The fair in the Deer Park—Lucerne—the Trappist monastery! There was a good continuity in this line. My need of love was far too great and far too sensitive to be able to rest fully content in any merely human relationship. My capacity for love was far too poor and far too tainted by selfishness not to disappoint everyone in the long run and to weary even the best will. For the egoist there is only one rescue, to throw himself into the arms of God. God is able to love without being loved in return, and to go on loving, perseveringly, stubbornly, untiringly to the last. And it is such love as this that is needed, in such a never extinguished fire the heart of the egoist must be heated year in, year out, through all the stages of life, from black-haired youth right up to the whitest silver of extreme old age, so that at long last it may grow just the least whit gentler, begin to forget itself only just the fifteen minutes needed to die in. The egoist feels this dimly but strongly, and his path goes away from all those relationships which are beyond his strength, to the only one possible for him—the relationship with God, in which everything is done for him and he has only to *receive*, the only thing he is capable of doing.

VIII

Monasteries and again monasteries—did I see nothing else in Belgium? Yes, of course I saw the museums, both in Bruges and Antwerp, and wherever I went I filled my pocket diary with notes about what I saw. I still cherished a particular interest in pictures representing supernatural subjects, such as, for instance, in the *Musée*

civique in Bruges a Day of Judgment by Prévost: "Large, bright precious stones are strewn on the ground of Paradise. Angels are clothing souls in their heavenly garments, hosts of the blessed are coming in through the gate of heaven with palms in their hands. On the other side the cities of the earth are in flames, despairing souls are sinking into the mire of hell amongst fantastic monsters." Or B. van Orley's picture of the Day of Judgment in the Art Museum in Antwerp: "The Last Day; the Valley of Jehosaphat. The redeemed rise like plants from the green earth, standing in endless rows far, far into the picture, newborn, naked, happy. In the foreground the damned are fleeing, in the middle of the picture is Christ triumphant in the clouds, underneath Him the Cross, borne by angels, under them again circle behind circle of thousands of angels. In the midst of the valley hovers St. Michael with the balances."

From Antwerp I went to Brussels (*le train bloc* runs the forty-five kilomètres in half-an-hour), and there I was met by a Swedish doctor living in the Belgian capital. I had made his acquaintance some years earlier in Copenhagen, in the winter of 1898-99. One day a tall, fair Swede came into my room and introduced himself as Doctor Brand of Lund—as a recent convert to Catholicism—and as the friend of August Strindberg.

The Swedish poet had just at that time published *Inferno*, the last pages of which seemed to announce an approaching conversion. "A friend asks me: Whither does the way lead?" are the words at the close of this book, and the answer reads: "I cannot tell. But for me, personally, it looks as if the Way of the Cross were to lead me back to the faith of my fathers." "Catholicism?" "It looks like it." And Strindberg went on to explain how the occultism of the 'nineties, theosophy and Buddhism, had only been studies on the way to Rome. He proclaimed that Protestantism had been a treason against the Mother Church, or rather a chastisement,

laid upon the barbarians of the North, a Babylonian exile, from which they were now to return.

It was in June 1897 that Strindberg wrote these lines in the last chapter of *Inferno*. He had then "discovered that his existence had only had the aim of degrading and defiling him, and that life had whirled him round like certain of the damned in Dante's hell." In this state of mind he met Dr. Brand, who had just become a Catholic during a sojourn in Belgium and who was preparing to return to that country. A series of conversations about Catholicism result in a letter to "a Belgian monastery," asking for refuge for the sinner who had so long been tossed about in the circles of hell.

The "Belgian monastery" was none other than Maredsous and Strindberg had really stood outside and knocked at the door. So far as I know there is no account by the poet himself of this visit to a monastery and it was but a short one. But Dom Ursmar Berlière had told me about Strindberg's fine appearance (*sa tête splendide*, said the Benedictine, passing his hand over his own head to indicate the poet's tawny mane), which had immediately won everyone's sympathy for him. And indeed, on the first day he seemed to feel quite at ease in the monastery, walking slowly along the paths and muttering to himself: *Pax, pax!* Truly, the motto of the Benedictine Order must have been like a healing balm on that distracted heart!

But the unrest in the great poet's soul soon proved to be stronger than his need of peace. The wild flame which was his innermost being could not be subdued to an altar fire or to the quiet glow of the sanctuary lamp. After a stay of only a few days Strindberg fled from Maredsous—as I had once fled from Beuron. And *he* never came back.

Yet he had not on that account dismissed Catholicism from his mind. Doctor Brand handed me the continuation of *Inferno*—the continuation of the Jacob's wrestling

between August Strindberg and Christ—*Legends*. In June 1897 (June 25th, we are told in *Legends*) *Inferno* was completed. At the end of August in the same year Strindberg leaves Lund to go to Paris (his visit to Maredsous occurs on this journey). He stays in Paris during the winter of 1897-98 and there writes the first part of *Legends*, while the conclusion (*Jacob wrestling*) is experienced in Paris and written down in Lund in April, 1898.

And now, in the house of the hospitable Swedish doctor in Brussels, face to face with a great bronze bust of the poet behind Dr. Brand's writing-table, my thoughts go back to the past and all that the mighty Swedish writer had meant to me is revived.

I saw myself sitting, one dull, Copenhagen winter afternoon in 1886, in the reading-room of the Students' Association and reading *The Red Room*. It is the chapter about Sellén's and Olle's imaginary supper of reading aloud from a cookery book, and it is the chapter entitled "Absinth." After that I cannot read any more, but get up intoxicated with that wild and bitter doubt which does not leave a stone upon a stone in existence—get up and go out, go through the streets like one who has drunk the green poison and feels himself set free and arrogant and despairing and hovering above everything and everybody. . . .

Then it is some years later, again in the Students' Association on the evening when *Miss Julie* was performed. Strindberg's first wife, Siri von Essen, played Julie on a stage of Shakespearean simplicity which had been erected in the large room. Afterwards Strindberg was the guest of the Managing Committee at supper in their room and when it was over the folding-doors were opened to the reading-room and there he stood *himself*, tall and thin in his closely-buttoned frock-coat, pale with emotion because he had been asked to speak a few words to us, his small, delicate hands nervously clenched. The words

were but few and we young fellows understood none of them. But we never forgot the white face, the wild glance, the small, firm, fanatical mouth.

And this August Strindberg of my youth, he whose picture had stood on the red, ink-stained table-cover near the lamp at six Kroner in my den in that dreary side-street—he, who in *Giftas*[1] had insulted the Lord's Supper and had incurred an action for blasphemy by the Swedish Government and received a medal of honour from the Swedish "liberal-minded"—he, who in *Utopias in Reality* had been the first in the North to think the most Radical thoughts—he was now, like myself, on the way to Rome.

And he saw himself, as I had done, judged himself, condemned himself. What did he not write about that medal which had once been his glory and was now his shame? "It is my image, the type of a guilty and ambitious person with hollow cheeks, bristling hair and a hateful mouth. And the reverse of the medal bears the device: "The truth is always unashamed." Oh truth, so hidden from mortals, and from which I was presumptuous enough to think I had torn the veil when I scoffed at the Holy Supper, the miracle of which I now acknowledge all the more. A godless memorial, raised to the dishonour of godlessness by malicious friends!"

This was the judgment on Strindberg's fame. The judgment on his work was not milder. "I set free the women, with the result that honest women became the equals of prostitutes and turned against their deliverer to strike him with their broken chains. I set free the wretched and oppressed so that society finds itself ruled by worse oppressors who have come into power. I wanted to set free the young from torments of conscience and from madness, and youth which has sunk into vice and crime accuses me of being a Catilina."

But August Strindberg was sternest in his judgment of

[1]Being married.

himself and of his life. When he looks back he sees the past as "only a tissue of crimes, a harvest of godlessness, wickedness, mistakes, coarseness in word and deed. Whole scenes of my past display themselves for my contemplation. I see myself in this and that situation, and it is always a distasteful one. I marvel that anyone should have cared for me. I accuse myself of all kinds of things; there is not a meanness, not a disgusting deed which is not written down in black upon the white slate. I am filled with horror of myself and wish I could die."

Was August Strindberg as great a sinner as he confesses he is here? Was he a greater sinner than those who have never accused themselves of anything? I do not know. I only know that on the night when I read these words in Dr. Brand's house I put a mark beside them. I knew what it was to marvel *that any one had been able to care for me*—I knew how it tasted *nearly to die of horror over oneself*—like the basilisk when looking into the mirror.

On my return to Copenhagen (I travelled straight home, at Louvain only just had time to see the Town Hall and Meunier's statue of Père Damien, the apostle of the lepers) I sent Strindberg a copy of *Our Lady of Denmark*. His answer, which I have at hand, but quote from memory, came about to this: "I hope one day to reach the standpoint to which you have attained."

It is well known that this did not happen. When I was in Stockholm shortly before Strindberg's death in 1912 and asked for an opportunity of meeting him the answer was that "we had now grown much too far apart." As a last greeting I sent him a card from Upsala with a picture of Swedenborg's grave; he answered with a telegram: "Thank you. Accept my greetings."

But in Saint Germain l'Auxerrois in Paris I have often thought that here the author of *Giftas* had heard Mass. Here he had stood near the door, near the holy water

font, and seen from afar the six lighted candles on the altar, and the priest "laving his hands and preparing for an act unknown to the Protestant." "Something strange, beautiful, exalted is happening up there amongst gold, incense and light . . . I do not understand anything, but am conscious of an inexplicable awe and trembling. . ."

"But then comes the feeling of shame in the heathen, the outcast who does not belong here. And then the whole truth becomes clear: the Protestant has no religion, for Protestantism is free-thinking, revolt, destruction, dogmatics, theology, heresy. And the Protestant is excommunicated. It is the ban, the curse resting upon us which makes us unsatisfied, sad, wanderers. In this hour I feel the ban and I understand why the conqueror at Lützen 'fell upon his deeds' and how his own daughter recanted. . . And what did we gain? Freedom to be outcasts, freedom to destroy and separate, to end in having no faith at all."

Strindberg heard Mass in Saint Germain l'Auxerrois, and when everyone had gone out he dared to take holy water and sign himself with the sign of the Cross. "With two fingers I touch the consecrated water, a ripple passes over it as—I think it was at the pool of Bethsaida—and now I pass my finger from my brow to my heart and then from left to right."

August Strindberg did not believe himself worthy to approach more than the holy water font, did not dare to go further up into the church, never reached the communion rails and the Holy Table.

But he had received the *prima signatio*. And in his last will he wrote: "Lay the crucifix upon my breast in my coffin. My brown cloak over the coffin. And place a black wooden cross upon my grave with the inscription *O crux, ave, spes unica*."

And so the poet of *Röda rummet*[1] found his rest beneath the sign of the Cross, the sign with which no one blesses himself in vain.

[1]The Red Room.

THE SACRED FIRE

Truth and love do not leave me.
PROVERBS OF SOLOMON, III, 3.

I

"You are fortunate in being a believer," a free-thinker once said to one of my French friends, a well-known Parisian advocate and a convinced Catholic. The Catholic answered with a smile :

"You are quite mistaken, Sir. One is not at all fortunate when one is 'a believer.' It is the greatest misfortune that can happen to you, to become a Christian, and if you believed in God (which, as it happens, you do not) you ought to ask Him to deliver you from it. *You* are fortunate who do not believe in anything ! You order your life as you please and at the same time keep your good conscience, and very possibly you will get into heaven at last, as it is presumably through no fault of yours that you are a free-thinker and a heathen. We others have received the gift of faith and the responsibility it entails, and it often weighs so heavily upon us that we nearly faint under it, as under the burden of a cross."

"Always the same incorrigible maker of paradoxes !" laughed the free-thinker and the conversation ceased.

But it was no paradox, it was a truth that my friend the advocate stated. As Mogens Ballin used to say, Christianity is no "Haven of Rest" or other institution for invalids! Christianity is contact with the living God, and the living God is a flaming fire, like that which Moses saw in the desert, and like the tongues of fire

which descended on the day of Pentecost. I have often thought, and do not believe Catholic theology has anything to say against it, that the two final forms of the hereafter (heaven, hell) are only expressions of one and the same fundamental phenomenon : contact with God. The essence of God is fire, for the essence of God is love, in the purest state of that feeling : *Charitas*. God is uncreated love, eternal fire.

But man's being too is love, is will, is fire. And this love may assume two forms, this will goes in two directions, this flame can become the dark burning of desire or the golden glow of goodness.

This was the teaching of Arthur Schopenhauer in the nineteenth century, it was that of Catherine of Siena in the fourteenth. The essence of the soul (the great saint of Siena teaches) is *amor*, love or will. This will may choose one of two ways, outward or inward. The will goes out in sensuality, selfishness, pleasure-loving egoism—and it is lost. It goes inward in renunciation of the world, in mortification of self, love of God and the love proceeding thence of its neighbour—and that is salvation.

At every step on either of these two ways the will is strengthened either for evil or for good. There is a continual growth in us—a growth of love or of heartlessness, a growth of the self (which we have through physical inheritance) or of Jesus (which we have received from above).

Then Death comes and divests us of all that is not that inner essence. We go hopelessly naked into the Beyond —into a world which is nothing but God and entirely God, that is to say love and entire love, it is to say fire, nothing but fire. If we are fire ourselves we become one with the clear and pure and golden fire of eternal purity and holiness and that is everlasting blessedness. But if we are darkness and cold, hardened selfishness and hopeless malice, the fire will burn us for ever without ever

being able to consume us (for we *will* not be consumed, *will* not surrender ourselves to love)—and it is that fire which is never quenched, and which is a torment throughout all eternity.

What is it then, to be a Christian? It is *to surrender oneself to the fire, while there is time*. Earthly existence is an existence in which the will is still able to choose, in which a man's being has not yet congealed and become everlasting. In these three-and-thirty or seventy years we hold our eternal lives in our hands. We can remain in the self, the flesh and the world or we can cast it out in love as in a flood of fire.

The Christian chooses the latter. He wants to leave himself, to get over to God, like a beetle struggling from the dust of the road into shadow and coolness.

But there is only one way—to let self be burnt out. Self cannot get into heaven, only the new man can do that. One must rid oneself of one's old being before crossing the frontier—as one must get rid of coin which is not current in the new country.

Becoming a Christian, then, simply means: *Voluntarily and for a time* to go into hell, instead of going *under judgment* and *for ever*. That is what the doctrine of Purgatory means. And before death the life of a Christian is already Purgatory.

Here on earth it is possible to escape from this Purgatory. Only a single "I will not," a single "I do not believe," and you are out again in the old, natural world, where you are certainly never overwhelmingly happy, but where, in compensation, you do not know anything of that stinging pain with which the bath in the holy fire burns the conscience. The even, tolerable life, seldom gloomily black, seldom shining white, now and then golden in earthly sunshine, but mostly dull and grey . . .

But he who has once been in the cleansing fire always longs to return to it. In that place of torment there are oases of peace—moments when the Master, as it were,

takes the crucible out of the fire, removes the slags and breathes soothingly upon the melting heart. And after each flight one goes again voluntarily into the furnace to get oneself burnt up and become one with eternal happiness.

II

In various ways the thought had suggested itself of an appointment abroad in some Catholic country. Once it was nearly arranged, it was the editorship of a German Centre paper in Leitmeritz in Bohemia. The post, however, was given to another and I tried to become correspondent from Rome to *Germania* on the staff of which Franz Peters, a young friend of the d'Auchamps, held an appointment. Nor was this hope fulfilled. Meanwhile, in one way or another, a move seemed to be necessary. And quite naturally my thoughts turned to Italy.

In more than one way I was prepared for it. Madame de Rambuteau's little book about Giovanni Colombini (*Un Toscan du XIV Siècle*) had led me to study the life of this saint in the *Acta Sanctorum* and thus brought me back to memories of Italy. On April 16th, 1902, I began my little book about Colombini (*The Sacred Fire*) and on the 29th it was finished. At the same time an article by Björnson in a Norwegian paper had called my attention to Sabatier's discovery and publication of the original Latin text of *Fioretti* (*The Little Flowers*) and I decided to complete the translation, begun in Assisi, of this work and to get it published in book form. When I spoke to Ernst Bojesen about it, however, he expressed some hesitation ; neither my two books about Rome nor the *Legend from Old Siena* had sold well. I pointed out that Björnson had recently written an article about *The Little Flowers*, and Ernst Bojesen then said : "Yes, if you can get Björnson to write a preface I will take the book." I had once met the great Norwegian writer in Silkeborg and he had then

expressed his appreciation of my abilities, though he disapproved of some of the subjects I had written about. I thought that I had now come considerably nearer to him and appealed to him with confidence. Nor was I disappointed. The preface came almost by return of post and the Danish translation of *The Little Flowers* was secured.

I completed the translation of *The Little Flowers* during a summer visit with my family to Sweden, at Falkenberg Strand. For many years I had not been in the country, practically not since that spring in Svendborg in 1894, before I went to Italy with Mogens Ballin. It was wonderful to leave harassing Copenhagen and after an enjoyable journey of a few hours, and that in a foreign country (but the country of my wife), to be installed in a red-painted wooden house, with worthy working people, right out on the open fields and near the beach. Our hosts, Mother Anna and her husband, who was a mechanic in Falkenberg, lived in the ground-floor rooms; we had the first floor, which consisted of a garret serving as a kitchen, two attics and a room in the gable overlooking grassy banks already yellowed by the summer and the blue Kattegat flashing in the sunshine. On the land side there was a garden enclosed by a stone dyke and behind the dyke a fence of whispering poplars, and out beyond dyke and fence endless fields full of flowers, over which carolled innumerable larks. Here we were wakened every morning by the sun and ran down to bathe in the blue Kattegat—here we nourished ourselves on the delicious, yellow, sweet-flavoured ryebread, baked by the Swedish peasants and called *limpa;* with it we had butter, eggs, potatoes and strawberries, while we drank new milk out of tin stoups and good, strong coffee out of big cups.

"And so your husband is a writer?" Mother Anna asked my wife. "But it's *true*, what he writes, isn't it?" My wife assured her that it was. And what could be truer than *The Little Flowers of Saint Francis of Assisi?*

In spirit I was in Italy and I saw Italy in my surroundings. The river at Falkenberg (Atran), which washes over large stone slabs, creams about boulders, rushes between the massive pillars of the old, curved bridge, reminded me of Italy—the distant blue mountain lines reminded me of Italy—but above all I found a great resemblance between Swedes and Italians. The peasant girls wear the same head-dress in bright colours as the young girls in Umbria, and brown, thin and wrinkled, fifty-five-year old Mother Anna skipped about barefoot and was as hard-working and merry as any peasant woman in La Rocca. Did it not sound like Italian when the little grand-daughter, sitting in the swing in the garden, swung softly to and fro and sang to herself a long ballad of her own making about a little *flicka* (maiden), her hats, frocks and shoes :

alla kängorna de äro mina
alla mina, all'i hopa,
alla de sma gula kängor
äro mina, alla mina . . .

I insert here a few summer pictures of Falkenberg taken from my diary : "July 21. Morning. I am lying out in a field with Erik" (my third son, then two years old) "and gazing up into the sky. A descending lark is outlined, grey, with outstretched wings, against a shining white cloud. Behind us bleating lambs are grazing on the hills, and a swallow flashes past over us with a sound like a rocket. Up under the deep blue sky with the white clouds a lark carols endlessly. When I raise myself on my elbow I see the quivering heat-glimmer low down on the ground and the shimmering of the sea. The light breeze is full of fragrance, coming from much yellow, sweetly-scented goose-grass.

"7 o'clock evening. I am sitting in the garden, on the green, faintly scented grass, with my back against a low fruit-tree and reading. The setting sun gilds all the grass

in the garden and throws long shadows of tree-trunks along the greenish gold. Flies are buzzing, children are shouting out on the green banks in the pasture, my children and the Swedish children from the house and the neighbourhood. A girl is passing by out there, jangling her milk-pail; I see the white kerchief on her head above the stone dyke. The untiring larks keep on singing up under the blue sky, which hangs with layers of shining white clouds behind the tops of the trees in the garden. The white clouds stand like a wall just behind the banks round the house, I see the grass straws in the farmyard against the white sky. My God, I am not worthy of this happiness, this peace!

"July 26. After a heavy morning rain emerges the hottest day. It is perfectly calm and above the grey heat-haze on the horizon the sky is clear and blue. It is quiet and over the wet fields sparkling with raindrops, solitary bees are humming. The sun is burning intensely and the air is so pure, so pure, so fresh and so warm.

"July 27. Storm. The sea is foam-flecked right out to the horizon. Tremendous showers, rain, wind and sun together beat over the sea and the moors. In a passing sun-glint a foam-crest far out flashes like a sail.

"August 1. My God, whither hast Thou led me? Am I again on the shores of my childhood's days? Am I twelve years old again—and is it not my son, but myself, who is running barefoot over the meadows near the beach and playing with ships in the shallow ponds? Is it myself from that time, is it the field at Slipshavn? The goose-grass smells sweet as it did then, the blue-bells are nodding in the summer breeze as then, and Loke's[1] heat-gleams twinkle in the horizon.

"But it was not Slipshavn, and it was not the age of irresponsibility. I was no longer a son of nature, I had drunk from the chalice of the supernatural and had to drink to the last drop. After that 1st of August which

[1] In Norse mythology is characterised by his treachery and deceit.

had reminded me of my childhood came the 2nd of August and stirred another home-sickness. The 2nd of August is the day of Portiuncula—on that day eight years ago I had followed Mogens Ballin through the little chapel in which the great pardon is won, and had climbed up to Assisi with unspeakable peace in my heart. That memory drove away all the sweetness of Nature, all the mournful joy of looking back, and ere I knew of it the sacred fire was burning around me on every side and separating me from humankind and from myself.

"August 2nd. Two temptations haunt me still and will not leave me in peace. The first is, that when I follow the Catholic Church, I do not follow Christ, for then I am the enemy of progress, of humanity and on that ground I shall be judged and condemned. This thought presents itself to me with such force that involuntarily I say to myself: 'Yes, it is a sin—it is a sin against the spirit of truth to persist so obstinately in believing what is evidently absurd!' Against this temptation I make use of the following prayer: 'O Jesus of Nazareth, protect me against all those gods who in the name of the good claim my worship. Protect me! I want only to do what is right and in believing in Thee I want by Thy help to become good. If I err in this faith the reason at least is honourable.'

"*The other temptation* is not new either, it is the temptation to despair at the sight of my transgressions. I see myself as I am, weak, feeble in faith, sensual, hard, loveless. Now and then I attempt to be saved, for a moment I have a hope of becoming good and getting over to the side of *those* who deal justly. But in my inmost heart I feel that I shall not succeed—because my inmost nature is drawn to the abyss and with a shudder perceives everlasting unblessedness to be its home country.

"I lack hope, I lack faith, because I lack charity. He who *does not love*, what can he hope for but hell? Therefore, when I am amongst good Christians, amongst be-

lieving Catholics whose hearts are full of charity, I always feel like one who has stolen in—one who has not on a wedding garment—one who on the last day will be set apart, pointed out, banished, and there will be a sudden silence, all will look at me and I shall be alone, and clothed in my black soul I shall go out between the companies of the white-robed who will shrink away from me, go out of heaven while the others sit down with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob—go outside in the darkness where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth for ever and ever. . .

"My God, my God, is this the truth about me? Or is there still hope—is it not yet too late? My God, it *must* not be too late—Thou who dost not wish the death of any sinner! Have mercy upon me, Lord, upon my coldness, my unfaith, my tepidity! Awake in me the spirit of faith, the spirit of charity, the spirit of humility, which is not ashamed of the bitter confession that hitherto I have not yet been a Christian, but only an evil and false Pharisee. My God, my God, until this day I have not yet done anything as it should be done. But vouchsafe to me from this hour to begin to serve Thee. Grant me the spirit of charity, not the spirit of pride, not the spirit of selfishness, not the spirit of falseness. Grant me the spirit which Thou gavest to that great, humble, loving man, whose words—says Thomas of Celano—were 'like fire, piercing the hearts' while my envenomed arrows only poison those whom they strike.

"Saint Francis of Assisi, make intercession for me ! Oh God, grant me the full pardon of my sins, a turning away from my malice and a sincere striving to do Thy pure and holy will. These three prayers Thou canst not refuse, in so much as Thou art the God whom Jesus of Nazareth has revealed.

"It is to-night eight years since that Portiuncula feast-day in Assisi. The feast is over now, the sun is nearly setting, now the last pilgrims are going quickly through

Portiuncula. Lord, grant me the pardon of all my sins *before the going down of the sun!*"

III

From Falkenberg my wife and I made an expedition to Vadstena. During my sojourn in Rome I had given some time to studying the life of Saint Birgitta and had written a chapter about her in my book, *Pictures of Roman Saints*. What was more reasonable then, than to make a pilgrimage to her grave before, as was now my intention, I again left the North? She too had turned her back on the North and had built her cell under the stone-pines of Rome.

We stayed in Vadstena from the 10th till the 12th of August, from the feast of St. Laurence till the feast-day of St. Clare of Assisi. We received two strong impressions in Vadstena—of *blåa kyrkan*[1]—and of the octogenarian priest living there, "the guardian of the grave of St. Birgitta," as he liked to call himself, Father Carlén.

Blåa kyrkan—that is the church which Birgitta built but never saw, the mother church of the Bridgettine Order, that which once was to Vadstena what Francesco's church still is to Assisi. The first day we were in Vadstena happened to be a Sunday and *blåa kyrkan* was open. Far away in the vast church a *kontraktsprost* or *komminister* or other Swedish ecclesiastic with an odd-sounding title was preaching, but he and his congregation of a couple of hundred took up hardly any room in the huge building. Those days are gone when crowded companies of pilgrims from all over the North flocked to the tombs of St. Brita and St. Karin or knelt by the church wall so that they might confess their sins through the low-placed window in the outer wall of the chancel to the Bridgettine priest inside. Now there was only preaching

[1]The Blue Church. The å in Swedish is pronounced as aw—blåa is therefore a word of two syllables, the second a being short, as in "at."

and hymn-singing and the swelling music of the organ. On one of the benches at the back sat two Catholics who found no kneeling-board at their feet, no priest at the altar in the chancel, but who had to be content to let the Catholic building speak to their hearts and souls.

Blåa kyrkan, as the Birgitta church is popularly called, probably to distinguish it from the church of St. Peter, which is of red brick, makes an impression of greatness, next of power, of purity and peace. Birgitta wanted her church to be of "simple workmanship, humble and strong." Her wish has been fulfilled.

Simple and strong are the octagon pillars of blue limestone bearing the white vaultings with the red arches. There are three naves and at the end of the middle nave a vaulted chancel, between the two tall lancet windows of which a large wooden crucifix extends its arms over the rough, greyish-blue stone. Strong and clear the light falls in through the windows to the south, and in the cool hour of early morning one feels that this house is still consecrated to the strong and good powers of life—to those that draw upward, *zu den gefilden hoher Ahnen.*

Near the church stand the old, conventual buildings, the monastery towards the south, towards the town, the convent towards the north, down towards Lake Vettern. One of these two religious houses is now a hospital, the other an asylum. Here may be seen, to the accompaniment of the shrieks of the insane, what a series of alterations and restorations have left of that house in which the great Queen Margaret was so frequent a guest, and in which Queen Philippa[1] died. One sees a refectory and a number of cells, one of which is incorrectly called "Birgitta's oratory." Birgitta never came to the convent of Vadstena; the chapel so richly adorned with frescoes was

[1]Philippa (1394-1430). Daughter of Henry IV of England. Married as early as 1406 to Erik of Pomerania, the elected King of the three united kingdoms of the North. In the King's absence Philippa ably and successfully organised the defence of Copenhagen against the Hanseatic attack in 1428.

more probably the oratory of her daughter Karin. An indication of this may be found in St. Sebastian being amongst the saints here portrayed ; from her sojourn in Rome Katharina had brought with her a fervent devotion to this martyr.

But it is *blåa kyrkan* istelf which is of most importance in Vadstena. One must visit it at more than one hour of the day, both in the evening when the tall elms and oaks in the churchyard whisper sombrely and heavily in the wind from Lake Vettern, and in the morning when large companies of light, merry birds crowd about the gables of Birgitta's church. In the evening there is at times an atmosphere as of a Flemish *béguinage* in Vadstena churchyard, but when you come out from the shadow of the trees you have a wide and unhindered view out across the broad Lake Vettern, whose waves flash like silver in the last light of the waning white nights. Thus did the Bridgettine nuns, centuries ago on many a summer night, see the shining waters of Vettern when they rose early to go to church and sing Matins.

Blåa kyrkan is still standing in Vadstena, but old Father Carlén has passed away. He was a remarkable personality. After having for years been a minister in the Swedish Lutheran Church, he became impressed, when already middle-aged, with Catholicism, resigned his office and went to Rome to study. At the age of fifty he returned home to Sweden as a Catholic priest and settled in Vadstena which he never afterwards left. When I made his acquaintance he was eighty-four years old, but his hair was still black and he skipped up the stairs in his house in front of his guests, taking two steps at a time. During the thirty years he had lived in Vadstena he had not succeeded in converting a single one of the inhabitants to the Catholic faith, but everyone loved and revered him, and if you asked a child in the street where "the priest" lived, you were not directed either to the *Kontraktsprost* or the *Komminister* but straight to Father Carlén's

villa in the shadow of St. Birgitta's church. In ordinary circumstances the Catholic congregation in Vadstena consisted of one person, and this one had travelled thither from Stockholm. This was a government official holding an appointment in the Record Office, Erik Ihrfors, whom Carlén usually called "that young man from the Archives," and who was actually a dignified gentleman of sixty with silvery hair.

Carlén did not consider it incumbent upon him to carry on propaganda. He looked upon himself merely as "the watchman," who kept a little lamp alight by the grave of the saint and at a distance watched over her inheritance. "I pray, I offer up the holy sacrifice of the Mass for Sweden, I do penance," he said to me. A wealthy French Catholic had enabled him to purchase the fairly large garden and the house in it which formed his property, and which he intended on his death to bequeath to the Swedish Vicar-Apostolic, in order that a Bridgettine convent might one day be erected there. He occupied only a few of the eleven rooms in the house; a room in the gable had been fitted up as a chapel. Here he said Mass for us in the morning on the feast of St. Clare—the window stood open out to the green trees and during the consecration a bird sang sweetly and loudly outside. We drank coffee with him afterwards, it was one of those happy morning hours, after the worship of God, in sunshine, with a conscience flooded with light, which is perhaps known only to Catholics. After that he showed us his house. As we went through his bedroom I noticed the bed and touched it; it was as hard as a board, with neither mattress nor feather-bed.

Both the priest and the congregation, both Father Carlén and "that young man from the Archives" came with us to the station. At parting Carlén handed me the *Traité du Divin Amour* of St. Francis of Sales—"everything is contained in it." I never saw him again; he died in the following year and Vadstena is still waiting for the

Bridgettines to come and build on Father Carlén's property.

On the way home my wife and I visited Alvastra—the ruins of that monastery, at the gates of which the Swedish saint passed the first years of her widowhood, and from whose church she set forth on her great pilgrimage, described by Verner af Heidenstam, and from which she was never to return. We visited the ruins of convent and church, we put up at the neighbouring newly built hotel and we climbed up the Omberg, the one mountain of East Gothland, at the foot of which Ellen Key had not yet established herself.

"Climbing to Hjässan," says the diary. "Wild roses on tall, climbing bushes. Strawberries along green paths, scent of wood-smoke, moss-covered blocks of stone like furry heads of trolls peeping up through the juniper bushes and bilberry copses. Finally out on the bare mountain—slabs of stones—'Issen.'[1] Outlook on bluish-greying Lake Vettern, a streak of sunfire under the opposite mist-shrouded coast. This streak widens out into a large, flashing troll's mirror, while an immense gloom gathers up above us from the east.

"View to the east: first there are tops of spruce in large, descending hosts. Then, yellow, green, brown fields in squares and stripes; spots of red and white houses, here and there a shining white church; then vast blue-black surfaces of forest and the leaden grey Lake Täkern under a lowering grey sky drowning in fringes of rain and frayed strips of fog. A cart is rumbling along a road down there in the broad country; up here is the tinkling of bells on cows grazing on Hjässan.

"After the shower. Vettern is silver grey with tiny little waves. The sun-streak is still there, the land rises blue behind it, above it are rows of silver-gleaming clouds like heavenly hosts with silver helmets.

"Descent. Meadowsweet along the path, yellow stone-

[1]The crown of the head.

crop in clefts of the rocks, goose-grass, speedwell, bluebells, lady's mantle, mint, willow-herb stand close in the mossy ground. Juniper bushes. The mountain falls precipitously towards spruce-filled depths. Everything is soaked, wet through and through, the big moss-cushions are wet, drops are falling softly from the pointed leaves of the juniper bushes, the wild roses have a sweet and cool scent."

This was an afternoon climb to Hjässan, an evening's descent from it. The next morning we went to Skogslyckaäng. "10 o'clock a.m. The calm, warm air in the spruce forest, where there is a scent of pine, briar rose, wild strawberry, whose scarlet berries and leaves shine in the thick moss. A squirrel is sitting in a tree gnawing a cone—the scales of the cone fall softly. Otherwise everything is quiet—quiet.

"At Vettern. Big moss-dappled rocks push out in the lake under the shadow of large oaks. In the clefts of the rocks there are young beeches and wild rose-bushes in bloom. A brook, its course along a forest-fence of beech, larch and alder, which we have followed a long while, falls like a little 'foss' down into a creek between big, reddish rock-boulders. I am lying high up on one of the two rock-points and below me the Vettern is plashing over a large, red submerged reef and gurgling into the caves in the side of the rock. Over the rock-bottom at the mouth of the creek where it is deep, the water is emerald green, further in light green with sun-glints upon it, dredged through foliage of rowan and alder and beech, furthest in the red and brown of the rock-bottom shines up through the water. Outwards the lake is deserted, rippled and silvery blue, bordered by distant, faintly outlined haze-blue shores.

"The rocks are reddish under the water, but rise brown, dry, fluted, fissured, crowned by spruce-forests looking like a drawing by Max Klinger. The water in the creek is milky green where the sunlight pierces through it, dark

green in the shadow. Sun-glints pass over it—it looks as if bright sword-blades were being turned in the water, or as if eyes opened and shut. For a long, long while I contemplate this joyous, soundless play of light. *Laudato sia tu, Signore, per messer lo frate sol . . .*"

We stayed yet another week in Falkenberg. In my room in the gable, looking out on the yellow hills and the blue Kattegat, I continued translating *The Little Flowers* and writing my diary. I find the following records:

"Aug. 15. To love God and no more to carry on polemics. That is the whole of my programme, and may God grant me grace to realise it.

"Aug. 17. 11 p.m. The full moon is shining over the wide, pale, deserted country. The sea is booming incessantly against the coast and I see the familiar stars—Arcturus, which means Svendborg, and Capella, which means the Catholic cemetery and Bengt's grave.

"When I think that it is God who has created all these stars—*then I hardly dare to believe in Him.*

"12. I look out of the window. Down below are the trees in the garden, softly stirring in the night-wind, and behind them, pallid in the moonlight, the harvested fields towards the houses and the white moonlit gables of Falkenberg. On the other side is the silver-gleaming sea, unendingly droning, and I hear the cry of a plover.

"Aug. 20. It is obvious that I am not worthy to be a teacher of my people and to fight the good fight for the Church of God. But—'because the most holy eyes of God have not seen amongst sinners one more vile, nor more insufficient, nor a greater sinner than I, and therefore to do that wonderful work which He intends to do, for this cause He has elected me.' (*The Little Flowers*, Ch. X).

"Aug. 21. Evening in the garden and in the fields. Wind and moonlight. The roar of the sea, the distant

lights, the large, deserted fields. The vast, empty sky. The clouds past the moon, moonlight in between the slender, whispering willows along the dyke, over the green grass of the garden. The dark fir-forest over behind the fields, and the moon-white clouds above the woods. On the other side, behind other moonlit fields, Falkenberg, low and little with its one station light and the one grey spire of the church.

"Aug. 22. Sunshine and wind. The fields as though newly washed in light. The last morning, Erik and I go out across the heath, out to a little heather and thyme-grown dell where we generally lie quite still and look up into the deep-blue sky and into the shining white cloud mountains. For the last time my smooth-worn shoes slip on the moss and the half-withered grass. Bluebells and scabiosa nod in the wind. The sea, which is quite dark to-day, foams in white crests. Far out shines a solitary, snow-white sail.

IV

On the morning of October 21st a third-class carriage in the train to Gedser was occupied by some children dressed for travelling, by my wife, her sister, who was accompanying us to Rome, and by myself. "When I go to Italy, I generally"—began my little daughter—who was now six years old and called Missa, no longer Tulle—as she began most of her sentences; was not this already her second journey to Italy? On the platform stood the d'Auchamps, Mogens Ballin, Niels Hansen and many other good Catholic friends, and wished us a good journey. The travelling purse was but meagre—not eight hundred kroner—and we were many. In order to be able to live in Italy I had made an arrangement with *Vort Land* to send a weekly article, which was also to be printed in a Norwegian paper.

Then we were off (and in one stretch) on the old route

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—Berlin, Munich, Brenner. At Ala we heard the first Italian, "beautiful, gallant, dear, familiar"—in Verona a father entrusted his son to me, a boy who was to travel alone to Naples, asking me to look after him as far as Rome and there help him to the right train. The little Italian made the journey in the company of my children.

It was night when we left Verona, and all night long we travelled between mountains and beneath stars. As the day broke I alone was awake, and with a swelling heart I saw the vine-clad hills of Tuscany about me, the white houses, the black cypresses. At Pistoja the dawn rose blood-red, at Firenze it was golden day and I glimpsed far away the dome of the cathedral. Giotto's white tower, Arnolfo's grey tower, and Fiesole—*Fiesole !*

Onward through Val d'Arno. At eight o'clock we were at Rignano sull' Arno. The river valley was still filled with the fog of the harvest morning—into the mist curved the tall, narrow bridge which I remembered so well—small donkey vehicles were rolling over it—bells were ringing for Mass.

Terontola—here it was one had to get out when going to Assisi. Noon-day sleep, sun-warmed and calm, rested upon the vine-fields. My longings followed the shining rails going into Umbria.

But our goal was Rome, and in the afternoon we arrived. We arrived, and my wonder was so great, that it seemed to me it could not be real. The fountain plashed in the Piazza Esedra, the Baths of Diocletian stood there in their red-brown walls, the little, narrow and shady streets we drove through to reach our hotel in the Piazza Poli smelt as usual of cheese, oil and of smoke from the juniper brushwood in the baker's oven. There was the sign on our grocer's shop—Taboga—and there at the corner was the wine merchant's, Paolo Chiappa's. Everything was as it had always been, everything was real, and for that very reason seemed a dream. After settling in at the hotel I went out alone, went into

the church of Sant' Andrea delle Fratte, close by, which I knew so well. There was the altar with the Madonna which had converted Ratisbonne—nothing was changed —I took one of the green kneeling-chairs and knelt as on so many a morning three years ago. Three years—what had become of them? Had they ever existed at all?

Not till I was in the post-office did I wake up—for amongst many other letters and papers awaiting me there was a registered letter, in which a friend of Léon Bloy, writing on his behalf, explained that our friendship was at an end.

I have mentioned the part which Bloy had played for me as a tutor in uncompromising controversy and as a literary model altogether. I have said nothing about my personal connection with him, and will only briefly touch upon it here. It was early in the spring of 1899 that I received a letter in which the French writer whom I admired so much informed me that he was living in Kolding, that he intended to pitch his tent in his wife's country (Madame Jeanne Bloy was a daughter of the poet Molbech), and that he hoped to have an opportunity of making my personal acquaintance. At the same time I received from him a copy of his last new book, *Le Mendiant ingrat*, which made a deep impression upon me by its description of the author's poverty. Here Bloy had touched a string which found a deep response in myself, and in my little weekly paper I wrote a long article about the book, about Bloy's work as a whole, and finally about the straitened circumstances in which he was living, and which had now compelled him to seek refuge in Denmark.

Bloy was grateful to me for this article, which I followed up by some chapters of *Le Mendiant ingrat* in a translation. Several Copenhagen Catholics interested themselves in him and sent him some pecuniary assistance. And between him and myself a correspondence began, which unfortunately is no longer in my pos-

session, but which on my part was characterised by a pupil's admiration, on his by the mature artist's absolute mastery of the French language. I remember that in one of his first letters he reproached me with having said in my essay about him (written in 1894 in La Rocca) that he was "not entirely orthodox." I could not offend him more deeply, he asserted. Nevertheless, we were on very good terms by letter, and before I left Denmark in 1899 to go to Assisi for the second time, he asked me to pay him a visit in Kolding.

This visit lasted twenty-four hours and I returned home with an impression which I can best characterise as complete disorientation. I was quite bewildered, did not know what to believe or think. I found in Bloy a certain jovial *bonhomie* which I liked and tried to keep to, but other sides of his character frightened, nay, appalled me.

A year after Bloy returned my visit in Copenhagen. As in Kolding, my first feeling was that of filial affection and a pupil's reverence for a master. Bloy said excellent things, striking things, inspiring things ; he was a virtuoso in telling pathetic and seizing traits of Christian heroism. He had the gift of tears and could also draw tears from others. I shall never forget his description of the French missionary in Further India, who from the ship on which he sailed up one of the great rivers proclaimed the hour of Mass by the blowing of a conch shell, and from the primeval forest came his parishioners, plunging into the water and swimming out to the ship, "like crocodiles, whose prey is Jesus Christ." Bloy was a master in producing violent emotions, and his criticism, which was as hard as a hammer, crushed where it fell. But I could not help him to smash Thorvaldsen into splinters, and I revolted when he declared about Leo XIII —whose Christian democracy he disliked—"I loathe that Pope !"

We parted more coolly than we had met. After a

stay of seventeen months in Denmark, Bloy returned to France. While I was in Belgium in 1901 I received a number of the *Mercure de France*, in which he published an extremely favourable, brilliantly written article about me ; simultaneously I received a letter in which he asked me to come from Brussels to Paris to see him. I declined this invitation with thanks, and then a long time passed in which I did not hear from him. And now here was a disciple, one who like myself had come under the magic of the great artist in words, and been bewitched by his violent religion. It was a disciple who wrote to me and informed me that Léon Bloy broke with me. The reason was that in an article in *Vort Land* about French prose of the present day I had omitted to mention him, although I had mentioned Villiers de l'Isle-Adam and Barbey d'Aurévilly, and "these names cried despairingly for the name of Léon Bloy." The punishment for this transgression was the forfeiture of his friendship.

"It is dangerous to have learned Christianity from Léon Bloy," I wrote in my diary after his visit to Copenhagen. And if he sought me out, would it not be because I was of his kin ?

I took this dismissal now as a good omen. I did not judge Bloy, but I understood that he was harmful to me and that it was not without peril for me to walk in his paths.

I did not judge Bloy, I do not judge him. I continue to admire him as an admirable prose-writer, and to honour that unyieldingness with which he has carried out his programme of life. Never has he written a line to please any public, never withheld a judgment for the sake of avoiding a breach. He has accepted never to obtain success and never to receive other appreciation than that of a small circle of the initiated. When I saw him in Denmark he was already looking like an old man ; he must now be over seventy and he goes on living,[1] goes

[1] Léon Bloy died in 1921.

on writing, goes on working and having influence. New young men are continually drawing near him, are impressed, fascinated, influenced, converted, and he counts amongst his friends not only poets, men of letters and musicians (Emile Baumann, Edmond Barthélémy, Vincent d'Indy), but a philosopher like Jacques Maritain, a natural scientist like Pierre Termier.

Fifteen years have passed away since Léon Bloy said good-bye to me, but though I am no longer amongst those who receive his works with one of the dedications in the writing of which he is a master, I think I have read everything he has written. Wherever I happen to be in the world—when I see Bloy's name on the cover of a new book in a bookseller's window, I must go in and buy the book! And through three hundred pages I am again under the old magic; I grow enthusiastic, I hate, I love, I revolt, I am angered, I glow, I melt, I weep—"all the feelings that slept in the crypts of the heart break out of their hiding-place and crowd together like a company of mutilated virgins, naked, blind, hungry and sobbing" (*Le Mendiant ingrat*).

V

I said good-bye to Léon Bloy—and surrendered myself to Francis of Assisi. After having completed the translation of *The Little Flowers* I provided it with a set of notes of comment and information, which necessitated a renewed study of the life of the Umbrian apostle. The thought then matured in me of writing a biography of the great saint and thus paying my debt to Assisi.

In December 1902 I began my studies for a work of this kind in the Vatican Library. After the studies, at the end of April and the beginning of May, came the journey to the Franciscan shrines which I have described in "The Pilgrim Book."

The preparatory work for my book on Saint Francis,

the work of writing articles (to *Vort Land* and to *Kristiania Morgenblad*) in order to live, took up so much of my time that not much of it was left for writing in the diary. Besides, the long interior struggle, which had now lasted about ten years, was drawing to a close. I had reached what I called in my diary an "*unshakable reasoning.*" Under this heading the entry for January 14 contains the following:

"1. There is a God who rewards the good, punishes the evil, and both reward and punishment are everlasting.

"2. One who with all his heart seeks to do what is good, to avoid what is evil, must be pleasing to God.

"3. But as the means to attain this end, the same, really existing God has given me Catholicism. I do not know whether God wishes others to be Pantheists. I know that He does *not* wish me to be one. On the other hand, the more I become a Catholic, the more earnestly I acquire Catholicism, the nearer shall I come to doing God's will.

"4. Therefore, in watching carefully over my judgment of others; in being on my guard against all false zeal; in relentlessly controlling and keeping account of my motives for thinking, speaking and writing; in continually correcting my intentions and striving more and more to seek the glory of God; in "rejoicing in the truth" and avoiding a "rejoicing in unrighteousness," I may reasonably hope to be on the right path and dare to look with confidence to being saved."

This calm reasoning is followed by a like-minded prayer:

"My God, I want to live for one thing only: the truth. Let therefore everything in me die which loves and seeks lying. I renounce it; I give myself to Thee, Thou, the eternal God of eternal life, and I ask Thee to accept me as Thou didst accept the widow's mite. My God, I am not worthy of the truth, I am not worthy of

Thee, I know it only too well, but be merciful to me! Lead my soul straight to Thee, suffer me not to seek anything but Thee, but Thy truth; let all personal predilection for this or that thought die in me. Oh, my God, I give Thee my life—grant to me the honour and the grace to live it for Thee. Lead me, rule me, guide me—let me 'work the truth,' 'for he who worketh the truth shall come to the light.' My God, I surrender myself to Thy holy will, grant me in all things to seek it, show me the path I must tread to fulfil it. My God, here in the world my will is only this, grant me the means to attain it. Show me Thy will and make me give up all self-will. My God, not for anything in the world would I lose Thee. Let me find Thee, own Thee, never leave Thee, but for ever be one with Thee and with all those who love Thee!"

This trend of thought and this direction of mind go through all my notes from that winter in Rome. On January 30th there are these lines: "When one considers that life is only lived once, then faith and unfaith are almost equally great ventures. We choose—we live our lives in faith or unfaith—and death comes and shows us that we have (perhaps) chosen wrong. One thing, however, death can*not* take from us—to have lived in what is good. He who has lived well can die in peace. Death will not detract from his life. The main point is then: to do good. We are therefore justified in believing in that which leads us to do good."

Proceeding from this train of thought I wrote *The Pilgrim Book*. My *first* sojourn in Rome in 1899 had led me to understand the words of the apostle: "In the holiness of truth"; I had seen that what is truth must produce holiness. *This* time there was another Pauline saying that became clear to me—the saying about charity, that it "rejoices in the truth." For the first time in my life I felt wholly and fully that I wanted the truth, the whole truth, nothing but the truth. The truth such

as it was. But truth was the power whose fruit was goodness, was charity, was holiness.

In a book about John Ruskin which came into my hands at this time I found the prayer which his mother had taught him, and which became the guiding star of his life—"Truth and love, do not leave me!" In this prayer I too found entire peace.

After a life of seven years in the Catholic Church, the holy of holies was at last opened to me, and from the outer court I was permitted to enter into the Temple. In two ways this advancement was made known to me—an interior and an exterior.

The exterior one was that Bishop von Euch, at the close of 1902, allowed *The Catholic* to expire. The last number came out on December 28th of that year; I give here some lines of the article in which I took my leave of a task which had extended over four years and a half: "Often I have undoubtedly been unfortunate in my endeavours to find the right spirit and strike the right note in my articles; many times, especially in the beginning, that which I wrote must have jarred and offended. A first attempt, however, must in the nature of things be imperfect, and—as Newman has said—'if one waited to do everything until one could do it perfectly, nothing would ever be done in this world.' He who *acts* runs the risk of making mistakes, but in making mistakes and becoming aware of them one learns to do right. In that respect *The Catholic* has been of invaluable use to me, and just as there are books of mine which I would now wish unwritten, or, at any rate, written differently, also amongst my later ones, so there are pages in *The Catholic* which I could not write now, and the spirit of which seem to me anything but pleasing. In this I am thinking particularly of a great deal of the controversy I carried on at the beginning and in which, unconsciously, I often 'mixed strange fire with the fire on the altar.' Not till late in the day did I understand

what Saint Gertrude says, that 'even the wicked are members of Christ, sick members of His body, and therefore to blame them harshly is the same as striking the Saviour's aching wounds with a clenched fist.' It is my hope (at any rate it was my endeavour) that in the later years of my little paper less of this harshness would be felt. And I entreat those Protestants who have perhaps been scandalised by these faults to be assured that nothing can be less Catholic than uncharitable, censorious polemics, and that the fault, wherever they have encountered it, has entirely been that of the individual, not that of his Church.

"It is therefore not with unqualified satisfaction that I can put away the five small volumes containing the numbers for the period 1898–1902 of *The Catholic*. I take leave of this sphere of work not only with the sadness naturally accompanying every form of farewell, but also with the despondent feeling produced by looking back on one's mistakes. These mistakes are all the more regrettable in having occurred publicly, and their effects may have been far-reaching—further, perhaps, than it is now possible for the present retractation to reach."[1]

[1] In justice to myself—and one owes oneself that sometimes—I will not omit to add that not *everyone* judged *The Catholic* so severely. The last number of the paper, for instance, contained a letter of thanks addressed to me and inserted by the temporary editor, the Catholic priest in Silkeborg. It was written by a young, enthusiastic convert, the author, Richard Jahn-Nielsen. This letter of thanks read as follows:

Mr. Johannes Jörgensen.
Sir,

I have been at work on the writing of a poem for the last number of your paper, but my attempts have failed. I must therefore ask you to accept these lines of prose.

My intention with the verses, which I did not succeed in writing, was the same as with the prose, which is now being written, that is, to thank you on behalf of friends, other readers and myself for the work you have given to *The Catholic*, now that this work is coming to an end. (I confidently take upon myself to speak for all of us.)

For myself: it is years since one of your books first came into my hands. It thrilled me by its wealth of thought and feeling, it burnt itself into my youthful consciousness so that I never quite forgot it. Time passed—and my soul passed—away from the day and the light

For seven years I had served for the Leah of religious controversy; I felt that henceforth I was to serve for Rachel, for religion herself. The disappearance of *The Catholic* from my life was an exterior intimation of it; it was followed by another, still plainer sign; both occurred without any intervention on my part.

During the winter of 1902–1903 I lived with my family in a small flat on the fourth floor in Via Gaëta, at the corner of Via Castelfidardo, and every morning I went by tram to the Vatican to study. About mid-day I generally returned on foot, and on the way went into some church or other to hear one of the late Masses you can so often come across in Rome, where there are many old priests, who get up late and consequently say an equally late Mass.

One day, it happened to be the 16th of February, the anniversary of my reception into the Catholic Church, instead of going out to the Vatican I had gone to the *Biblioteca Vittorio Emanuele* to look at the historical reviews in the reading-room. I had then become absorbed in an article in *Le Correspondant*—an article in which Alfred Baudrillart (the present head of the *Institut Catholique* in Paris) had written about the much-discussed question of the relations between dogma and historical research. I did not make a note of the title of Baudrillart's

towards everlasting darkness. Then one of your works again came into my hands and a chord began to vibrate in me, hushed at first and sad, later rushing like a mighty wind, a chord I had long since thought was broken. And thus *you* became for me the guide back to life.

I thank you for this book and for other books, and not least for your work on *The Catholic*, that little Catholic flower which sprang up yesterday and withered to-day, because the soil was too poor, the mould too thin to-day.

There are several, perhaps, Mr. Jörgensen, who are personally as indebted to you as I. We all of us owe you thanks at least for your labours, in which you have given your talent, your enthusiasm and your sincere good-will.

The Catholic will assuredly be missed—and gratefully remembered. This applies also to its editor!

A Friend.

Dec. 22nd, 1902.

article, but I see from my extracts that the French prelate spoke in severe terms against "those narrow and jealous spirits, whose greatest pleasure it is to see heresy everywhere and to put out the candles which they find burning round about them." The writer admitted that the Catholic Church was conservative in science, as well as in politics and social questions, and approved of it. "She is compelled to be so. She can only venture to take a step forward when she is sure that she need not step back again." At the same time he emphasised the words of Leo XIII to Monseigneur d'Hulst: "I do not wish to prevent the learned from working. They must be allowed to vacillate, *they must even be allowed to go astray!*" Sustained by this statement of the great Pope, the French ecclesiastic declared himself "the knight of three noble ladies: religion, liberty and science!"

La religion, la liberté, la science! These words acted upon me as a final deliverance. All that I possessed of sincerity, of truthfulness, of the fear of displeasing God, drew a long breath of relief. I sat motionless, leaning back in my chair and feeling as if great doors were being opened into worlds where everything was light and light and more light—and *I* had a right to go in, *I* had been called to such a task and to so great a joy.

I wanted to go on reading, but just then the library attendant came and asked for the portfolio; the new number had come and was to take the place of the old one. Only half an hour later and I should perhaps never have read the words which had now made so deep an impression!

I left the library and went out, went to the neighbouring church, the *Gésu*. As I had foreseen, there was an old priest who was saying Mass at one of the side altars. It was just at the hour of noon, it was the same hour in which I had seven years before made my Catholic confession of faith in the church of the Sacred Heart in Copenhagen.

"The Church of the Sacred Heart"—I looked up from the place where I was kneeling and above the altar saw the picture of the Sacred Heart by Maratta. It was before the altar of the chapel of the Sacred Heart in the Jesuit church *Gésu* that I celebrated the seventh anniversary of my reception into the Catholic Church. As the priest lifted up the consecrated Host the sun broke out (the morning had been heavy with clouds) and it was as if the golden light suddenly filling the church radiated from the chalice with the sacred Blood. It was as if a ray of gold pierced my heart and with a strong, deep emotion of my whole being I vowed myself for ever to the truth.

AT THE GATE OF THE TEMPLE, WHICH IS CALLED BEAUTIFUL

Him they laid every day at the gate of the temple, which is called Beautiful . . . .

And as he held Peter and John, all the people ran to them, to the porch which is called Solomon's. . . .—ACTS iii, 2 and 11.

In March 1903, on March 3rd, I saw Leo XIII once more, and for the last time. It was in the Sistine Chapel, and as soon as his alabaster countenance appeared in the doorway between the ostrich feather fans, I saw how he had aged. When he stood before the altar he looked as if his bent figure might collapse at any moment. But his voice was unchanged, it was clear, ringing, strong like the iron bell in the Mother Church of all churches, and he made the sign of the cross slowly, endlessly, as if he could not let go the four corners of the world.

On that day in the Sistine Chapel there was a little group of old peasants from the Abruzzi—they laughed incessantly, from sheer emotion—their laughter of overweening joy nearly choked them. . . .

Through my heart, too, swept a fervent wave of affection, of gratitude, of contempt of myself and my stupid person, of awe of the God who had now through nineteen centuries continued to speak to the world through undying Peter. . . .

The last I saw of Leo XIII was his white hand raised in benediction—then he was carried away and the white fans hid him in the doorway. And as I walked down the *Scala regia* between the descending crowds from the audience, I thought of all that the hand of this old man

had blessed—that it had given his blessing to democracy and allowed the love of truth to search, nay, even to go astray. . . .

I went into St. Peter's, I knelt with my forehead against the marble baluster round the tomb of the fisher of men. Like the convert on the road to Damascus, I had also, for the second time now, "gone up to Jerusalem to see Cephas, and dwell with him."

Cephas—Petrus—my thoughts went back to one of the earliest events in the life of the first pope, after the Master had left him behind alone. I thought of the story in the Acts of the Apostles about the man who was lame from his mother's womb, and who was everyday placed by the gate of the temple, which is called Beautiful, amongst other poor cripples, in the hope that the shadow of Peter at the least might fall upon him and deliver him from his infirmity (Acts iii, 2 ; v, 15 ; iii, 7).

I, too, was such a cripple from my mother's womb, weak in faith, weak in will, a patient riddled with doubts, continuing to suffer from the effects of an old infection and innate disease. Twice had I sought healing in Rome —twice had I, an exile on the earth, looked in Rome for the place where I could lay my head. Twice had I found healing in Rome, and found a home there.

"They laid him every day at the gate of the temple, which is called Beautiful, that when Peter came, his shadow at the least might overshadow him. . . . But Peter, taking him by the right hand, lifted him up."

Twice I too had sat down by the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful. And the shadow of Peter had fallen upon me and I had grown well. A word of Peter had been spoken over me, an outstretched hand had raised me up.

Then came to pass with me that which is told in the holy legend : - "his feet and soles received strength. And he leaping up stood and walked and went with them into the temple, walking and leaping and praising God."

And they knew me, that it was I who had been lame from my mother's womb, and they were filled with wonder and amazement at that which had happened to me.

But I kept hold of Peter and John—of truth and love.

Assisi.
May, 1918.

ENVOI

I

It is not the smoke of the factories that veils the horizon—
It is not yellow, dirty smoke of coal that slowly and ceaselessly belches forth from tall chimneys—
It is the fine, blue, light mist of smoke from the charcoal-ovens,
The great ovens burning in the mountain forests day and night,
Pillars of cloud by day, pillars of fire by night—
Burning in the mountain forests, now as two thousand years ago,
When Hannibal passed by, on the way from Gallia Cisalpina to Fiesole and the lake of Trasimene,
And his last elephant died in wintry cold Falterona.

The smoke is blue, the mist is grey, the morning grows towards noon,
I am sitting high up, my back against a gnarled tree-trunk, my spiked boots against the moss-grown root of a mighty elm.
Big ants are busily climbing over withered leaves,
The first cyclamens are in bloom,
A bird is twittering softly in the cool and sombre forest.
A withered leaf falls.

Deep down are the sunscorched yellow and withered meadows where sheep are grazing and bleating,

Further away are vast and dark-green forests of chestnut trees,
Deepest down in the valley white towns are flashing
—Their names sound like little silver bells: Poppi, Bibbiena, Dama, Sarno, Chitignano . . .

Up beyond the towns, up above the valley rises the long ridge of Pratomagno,
Its crest is outlined in lilac against the sky,
High up on the mountain side the smoke ascends from a lonely charcoal-oven, straight like the smoke from a crater—
And beyond Pratomagno is Val d'Arno and is Firenze.

II

It is on a summer morning on Mount Alverna that I write these lines. Four thousand feet above the sea, between the sources of the Tiber and the sources of the Arno, in the midst of those wild Apennines of which Schack-Staffeldt[1] sang, but which he never saw—

In the wild Apennines,
By a lonely spring . . . .

I had to think of these lines of the great Danish poet (who is our Leopardi, as Ingemann[2] is our Manzoni,

[1] Schack-Staffeldt, Adolph Wilhelm (1769-1826), descended from an old family of the Pomeranian nobility. Made his début in Danish literature in 1789 by two violent pamphlets against the Germanising of Denmark. Travelled through Germany, Italy, Switzerland, France and Holland, and in his diary shows his enthusiasm for the ideas of freedom of the Revolution, and at the same time a contempt of the Middle Ages and Catholicism. His best contribution to Danish literature is to be found in his two collections of poems. Historically he belongs to the school of romantic nature philosophy. In his poetry he is universally lyrical, as opposed to Oehlenschläger's Greek-Nordic epics. (See footnote vol. i, p. 53).

[2] Ingemann, Bernhard Severin (1789-1862), became a student in 1806 and was in Copenhagen during the bombardment in 1807. Known to all Danes for his historical novels (some of which deal with the period

Drachmann[1] our Annunzio) when one afternoon, almost near evening, I came wandering alone through a deep ravine, where running water was trickling softly between grey rocks. I stopped—the silence was so deep—only high up in the blue air, high up above the beechwood of Mount Alverna, already faded and russet brown—two falcons were slowly wheeling and crying their sharp, fierce cries. In the chilly shadow, between the grey stones, as the night relentlessly drew near, the water trickled like a lonely, hopeless, weeping . . . .

III

Everyone reaches that which it is really his *will* to reach.

I declared this when I began to write this long book; and I repeat it now that it is finished and the manuscript of the six volumes is lying before me. In his sneering manner Rémy de Gourmont once said: "The unpleasant thing is, that when you seek truth *you really do find it*," wherefore he who does not wish to be brought into the presence of truth would do best not to search!

This applies, however, not only to truth—it applies also to other values of life, and to those connected with it. You also find *happiness* when you look for it, you find *peace*, you find *life*. Or you find *unhappiness*, *unblessedness*, *death*. You find the lonely spring in the wild Apennines, or the spring from which the life-giving water wells up into life everlasting.

This was what I wanted to say in my book to all. To those who are still at the beginning of their lives, on the second or third of the seven stages—puerizia—adolescentia—I would say: "Look whither you are

of Valdemar the Great, Valdemar the Victorious, etc.), in which he was greatly influenced by Sir Walter Scott. Also wrote a large number of hymns.

[1] See footnote vol. 1, p. 55.

going! Because you will come to that to which you want to come." And to those on the later, the last stages—virilitas—senectus—I would say: "Look about you! You are where you want to be! The existence you have, the life you are living—bad or good, clamorous and distracting like the boulevard of a great city, or calm and gentle like a rose-garden; it is *your own work*. It is your *punishment*—and it is your *reward*. For it is the expression of your innermost will—it is *the working out of your ideal!*"

IV

And so I send this book out into the world—and send it from the mountain on which one of the greatest, perhaps, amongst mankind that has ever lived, attained to becoming that which he had always wanted to be—"conformed to Christ," "crucified with Christ." It was here on Mount Alverna that Francis of Assisi (as Dante says) "was marked with the last seals of Christ." Here, one September night in 1224, the little poor man of Assisi received the five red seals of the Holy Wounds as a sign and proof that Christ Crucified had through long years been his highest love and had at length obtained entire possession of his heart.

And as it came to pass with Saint Francis, so it comes to pass with us sinners. We all become what we want to be. Our fate is a fruit of our heart. My life is my reward and is my punishment and is the judgment upon me.

J.J.

Mount Alverna.
September, 1918.

UNICUS

Quia unicus et pauper sum ego.—Ps. xxiv, 16.

I

"Morning walk along Via Cupa to Via Nomentana. Morning freshness and morning coolness in the shade. But morning sun upon the white garden wall where lizards are sunning themselves, flies are buzzing, small red fumiters grow in the cracks in the stucco and in the crevices between the stones in the wall. Voices are speaking behind the wall, a cock is crowing. For a long while I stand contemplating a motionless lizard, whitish green with dark spots; look, how it breathes! Suddenly, with a start, it is gone. Further along a column of ants is crawling busily up over the wall. A bright-coloured butterfly flutters past me—a white one.

"Then the wall ends, and behind tall reed-fences there is a view over vast, undulating grassy plains with hills and cypress groves—the Campagna. Again I am shut in between walls. Through a gateway a peep in to a villa; an avenue of irises in bloom, flowering rose-bushes bending over them. Stillness. A white, sunlit gravel walk. At another place, another peep in to green lawns covered with white daisies, and shrubberies of bright-leaved bushes growing wild. Up on the edge of the wall a clump of poppies, the bright colour of which dazzles my eyes, so accustomed to books. On the distant mountains the white snow is glistening."

It was on April 2nd, 1903, that I wrote these lines in my diary, after a walk outside the gates of Rome. Spring

had come. Spring was calling. It called me out to the mountains of Umbria—out to my journey of research for that book about Francis of Assisi which I wanted to write as a thanksgiving for all that the great saint had been to me.

On April 21st I set out on this Franciscan pilgrimage of mine.

It was not carried out without practical difficulties. My monetary means were but small and my travelling equipment was limited to bare necessities: a bag slung over my shoulder, a cotton overcoat bought ready-made at Bocconi's, a cheap umbrella, which was also to serve as a stick in the mountains, and not very many lira in my pocket.

It was not carried out without anxiety. "Yesterday and to-day unrest and fear because of my Franciscan studies. Am I not wasting my time? Am I not on the wrong track? Shall I be able to support my family in this way? Would it not be better to give up the whole thing?" says the diary some weeks earlier (April 7). I still continued to receive *Tilskueren*[1] from home, and could not conceal from myself the abundance of new talent continually springing up from the soil of Danish Lutheranism and Danish free-thinking. Should I be able to hold my own at home? Was it not a piece of unheard-of daring to want to live as a Catholic author, live on being a Catholic author, in a country thoroughly Protestant? One day, in the Vatican library, when this anxiety urged itself upon me with unusual strength and prevented me from understanding the Latin texts I was studying, the thought struck me that I might become a German writer. "It is my incontestable duty to support my family. I have become aware of an unconquerable hostility against my works in Denmark and at the same time have found in Germany a lack of good modern hagiography. I should be able to make use of my studies

[1] *The Spectator*, a monthly literary review.

of Saint Francis, Colombini, Saint Clara of Montefalco, Saint Margherita of Cortona, Angela of Foligno, Francesca Romana, etc. Already I see before me a book with the title, *Umbrische Heiligenbilder*, and feel hope, courage and eagerness for work returning. At last I can make plans for the future suitable to my position as a married man and the father of a family—I shall be in a position to fulfil my natural duties and thus attain to a true, supernatural life, to moral and spiritual health, far away from an existence à la Bloy and from ideas like his" (April 4). During a walk with my wife the following afternoon, outside Porta Salaria, I told her about these plans of mine, which she approved. It was her thirty-fourth birthday, and it was Palm Sunday. On either side of the road the meadows were full of narcissi and jonquils standing as close as buttercups and marsh marigolds at home. My wife gathered large bunches, and we went on, out towards the snow-glittering Sabine mountains, to blue Soracte, and a little further came past a cardinal's empty carriage standing in the middle of the road. The cardinal was standing in the road a short way off—I think it was Svampa—surrounded by a flock of schoolboys from some college, to whom he was distributing little sacred pictures. As we approached the boys drew aside a little—the cardinal made a movement, as if in greeting—we then drew near, knelt down, and kissed the ring of the prince of the Church.

It proved not to be my destiny to settle in Germany and pursue my labours there. But my readiness to give up everything in order to do what was right was unconditional. In a prayer which was written down in Latin I said, "My God, let me not love my wife, not love my children, not love my country, not love my work, not love my life, not love the beauty of Italy, not even love the saints nor our religion and that which belongs to it (literature, worship, music) save in God. It behoves me not to seek myself, not even in good and holy things,

but above all to seek the will of God and *instaurare omnia in Christo*—which may God grant me His grace to do." (April 2nd. I let the quotation from St. Paul, Ephes. i, 10, remain in Latin; it is known in this form as the motto and programme of Pius X.)

Often I applied to myself the words spoken by St. Thomas Aquinas at the close of his life: *Venit finis scripturae meae*, "my authorship is drawing to a close." I was willing to give up this uncertain means of earning a livelihood, if this was desired in the Highest Quarters. "Will it be possible for me to inculcate in my fellow-countrymen that love of *holy Italy* which is burning in myself?" is the question I ask myself in the diary. "And what shall I do in order to use it as a means of supporting my family? My God, what is Thy purpose with us? Above all, grant me strength to leave Italy and give up all my plans, if such be Thy holy will!"

It was not the will of God, and my work as a writer was not drawing to a close. I am still sitting with a pen in my hand, and sitting in that Italy which I was then willing to give up. "Seek, and ye shall find." That winter in Rome I was firmly resolved, first and above all, "to seek the kingdom of God and His justice." And the promise of the Gospel was fulfilled—"all other things" were also given me. I was willing even to resign Italy, and Italy was given to me. Whosoever will lose his life shall find it.

Then I set out on my Franciscan pilgrimage, one April day in 1903. Out there, far away from the electric trams of Rome, amongst rocks and forests, amongst peasants and Franciscans, I found the true Italy again, *my* Italy, the Italy of La Rocca, and gave myself to it for ever with all the deepest longing of my soul for beauty, simplicity and peace. My lot was cast when, sitting at a window in the monastery of Fonte Colombo and gazing towards Greccio, which I had left in the morning, I wrote in my diary: "Evening is drawing near—the

mountains rise blue, ridge behind ridge. Far away on the mountain side I can still catch a glimpse of the little monastery in Greccio. It is very quiet here, only the cheep of a bird near by and singing in the valley below, a *stornello* dying plaintively away" (April 25).

I have described that journey in *The Pilgrim Book*, and have not much to add to what I wrote then. I see from my notes that I had planned a much more comprehensive programme—several of the places mentioned I have only been able to visit within the last few years, and some of them are still left!

The whole journey lasted only two weeks—from April 21st to May 5th. On May 2nd I arrived at La Verna for the first time, and nine years were to pass before I was there again. When I read now the description of my first coming to it, after frequent pilgrimages to the Mount of the Stigmata, I should like to make an alteration here and there. Did it really take me four hours to walk the twelve kilometres from Bibbiena? It cannot be denied, though, that I was at that time an unpractised mountaineer, used as I was to sitting for hours at a time crouching over a folio. That was why the "zig-zag stone steps" leading from the village of La Beccia seemed to me to be so endless—"at each turn of the stair-road there is continually a new stair!" As a matter of fact, the road makes only *two* bends—one at the so-called "birds' chapel," another immediately before you arrive at the gates of the monastery. But perhaps one must not expect too much accuracy from a drenched poet!

On the other hand, nobody must laugh at the "iron chains" which I heard "rattling in the church." The Franciscans at La Verna really use small scourges made of iron chains for the purpose of chastising themselves thoroughly; I have seen the instrument of penance myself, hanging in Father Samuel's cell beside his priedieu.

From La Verna (and this is *not* in *The Pilgrim Book*) I

made a détour to Loreto to see Padre Felice, who had, in 1899, been transferred to this famous place of pilgrimage. I travelled on a combined ticket (third class, of course) and had, in fact, so little money with me that it upset my calculations when I found that I had to pay for my food—which happened, for instance, at Foligno, where I had no introduction granting me a place at a monastery table. This literal following of the Franciscan rule, however, resulted in my arriving at Ancona with only three soldi (i.e. fifteen centesimi) in my pocket—and the train did not go on to Loreto that day! That is to say, there *was* a train, but it had no third-class carriages!

It was evening when I arrived at Ancona. I went for a walk in the town, which was illuminated by electric light; in one of the squares a military band was playing; in a corso there was a stream of elegantly dressed women and of men courting them. In a baker's shop I bought some bread, for which I paid two soldi, after which I went down to the beach to eat it, sitting on the sand by the darkening sea, which was rolling in white-crested, like the sea at Slipshavn. A light flashed from a lighthouse, went out and flashed again, like the light on Sprogö.[1]

Then with my one soldo in my pocket I went back to the station—and behold! *Capo Stazione* allowed me to go by the express—it was only a short way. . . .

And so between Ancona and Loreto I stood up in a corridor, in dread lest the guard should come (for the station master's permission was only oral, not in writing) and I was of course quite unable to pay the difference on my ticket. He did not come, thank Heaven, and the driver of an omnibus, running from the station up to the town of Loreto, was so courteous as to set me down at the door of a hotel, ring the bell for me, and declare that "I could pay to-morrow."

[1] An island in the Great Belt.

"Thus, in spite of everything, I am in Loreto," is the note in the diary. "My window looks out on a long and narrow street; directly opposite a lamp is burning before an image of the Madonna in a niche. In the mild and moist air there is a plaintive cry of birds high up—and a clock is striking, first six strokes, then three; then another one, first twelve, then three—a quarter to one! I have been on the march from four o'clock in the morning till now, from La Verna to Loreto, from San Francesco to l'Immaculata!"

"May 5. I wake up to sunshine and summer. The sun is shining behind the laths of the shutters and I drink my morning coffee in a light, airy dining-room, the doors of which stand open out to a sunny paved square surrounded by yellow arcades of Travertine. After the cold mountains this is summery Italy again!"

After drinking my coffee, I directed my steps to the neighbouring basilica, the work of Giulano da Majano and Giulano da Sangallo, with a dome by Bramante. Like the little Portiuncula chapel standing in the middle of the church of Santa Maria degli Angeli, the Holy House of Nazareth stands here behind a parapet of Renaissance reliefs, the *Santa Casa* carried by angels first to Tersata in Dalmatia and then across the Adriatic to the hill in the laurel grove—*Lauretum*, Loreto.

To tell the truth, I had gone to Loreto for the purpose of seeing Padre Felice again, now after four years of separation, more than of visiting the holy house. I dimly remembered having read at La Rocca a book written in defence of this miracle, and it had not convinced me. Not exactly because the marvel *a priori* seemed impossible to me, but because the account of it was furnished with such unreasonable details. The angels that come flying with the house cannot at once get it put down on the right spot—for a time it stands in one place, but then, owing to the ungodliness of the local inhabitants, it has to be moved a few hundred

yards away. There it cannot stay either, and the angels are again ordered to remove it. They do so, but when they have to move it for the *fourth* time they set it down in the middle of the road—just like furniture removal men giving up a job when they have to deal with an unreasonable housewife who cannot make up her mind *where* that wardrobe should stand. And there, in the middle of the road, the church has since been built over the holy house, and the town of Loreto has grown up round the church.

I left all this for what it might be, and went into *la Santa Casa*, as I would have gone into Mary's house in Nazareth and into that room in which the greatest wonder in the world came to pass—where the angel visited the Virgin and the Word became Flesh. A priest was standing before the altar in front of the ages-old black Madonna in gem-studded attire, and I heard Mass as I would have heard Mass in the Holy Land. Then I went into the church to seek Padre Felice, and found him sitting with bent head in a confessional, listening to a young ecclesiastic who was making his confession. With a silent nod my friend intimated that he had seen me; soon after he came out of the confessional and we went into the sacristy. There I first explained to him my state of pecuniary distress, and when that had been remedied we went into the monastery together, to Padre Felice's cell.

And now came some moments in which it seemed as if the old days in Assisi had come back. "A stroll with Padre Felice through sunny cloisters, up white-washed stairs, across sunlit terraces, until I find myself in his room, as at one time in *Sagro Convento*. A talk in front of the open door—outside there is a balcony with flowers, beyond it the vernal country, the mountains, the blue-and-green sea." Of our "talk in front of the open door" there is only this note in the diary—these words of Padre Felice: *Confiez-vous tout d fait d ld*

Providence ! But the whole of the Gospels is summed up in them.

I had dinner with the fathers in the refectory and afterwards drank coffee with one or two of them in Padre Felice's cell. True to the custom of their country, the two Italian Franciscans wanted to have the shutters closed against the sun, which was already very hot. But Padre Felice knew my northern heart, which could never have light enough, and opened the doors and windows wide to the radiant hour of noon. We went out on the terrace together, he and I, and stood looking out across the blue sea, on which there was a solitary white sail, and landwards over the green, vine-clad hills of the Marches of Ancona—the country of *The Little Flowers*—that which in the early days of the Franciscan Order "was adorned with holy and exemplary brothers, as the sky is adorned with stars." Yonder, in the Sybilline mountains, Brother Umilitas and Brother Pacificus had dwelt in the hermitage of Soffiano—in Monterubbiano, Brother Matthew had lived ; in Forano, Brother Peter and Brother Conrad ; in Fallerona, Brother James ; on Monte San Vicino, Brother Bentivoglio ; in Monte Giorgio, Brother Ugolino ; and over there, by the coast of the luminous sea, below the blue-toned promontory which hides Ancona from us, is Sirolo, where Brother Conrad of Offida once healed a woman who was possessed by the devil, by praying for her all night long, and early in the morning he fled from the town, that the girl's mother might not find him and a crowd have gathered to honour him for what he had done (*Fioretti*, ch. 42).

"All that is very beautiful," said Padre Felice, "and yet I would gladly exchange all the Marches of Ancona for a corner of Umbria !" His blue eyes gazed towards the west, it was as though they would pierce straight through the vast Apennines to see the plain at Assisi, to see the yellow ivory walls of *Sagro Convento*, and above all to see

the little valley of La Rocca, the beloved monastery and the church with the altar which Signor Francesco had decorated. . . . We talked about it, about *la mia Rocchicinola*, as Padre Felice lovingly called it, and which had now, he said, been so altered by his successor that he did not wish to see it again. "I prefer to keep the memory of it as it was then. La Rocca will continue to dwell like that in the minds of us three; there our friendship began and there our hearts will always meet."

In the evening I took my leave and travelled all night. It was moonlight, and I was awake most of the time. I sat looking out at the Apennines, whose vast, bare ridges towered up on both sides, wild and desolate in the strong moonlight. At Terni the dawn broke over vine-green fields—at Sette Bagni I saw, far away over the green Campagna, the faintly blue dome of St. Peter's.

II

For the present there was no prospect of realising the plans of settling in Germany, and at the end of May we decided to go back again to Denmark. During the winter Missa and her younger brother, Knud, had attended the school of the Sisters of St. Joseph in Via delle Finanze—it was in a mournful mood that I sat down one evening and wrote to the Reverend Mother to give notice that the children would leave. "This winter has passed so quickly," says the diary, "the cold mornings in May when I took Missa to school and we played that 'Spys' was out and that 'Spys' bit our fingers and the tips of our noses. . . . This attempt to settle here, which hardly begun, has to be given up again—and this breaking up, this journey home to an uncertain future and an existence the conditions of which are hidden from us—all this fills me with deep despondency, it seems to me that my life is running away from me and vanishing like a dream, and I am reminded of the words I read on the wall of

a churchyard near Fonte Colombo, written in pencil by some visitors and signed with some names and a date:

> Ferma il piè ! Dove vai ? Guardami alquanto
> se vuoi sapere quelloche io mi sia.
> Fui come te formato in simmetria
> ed ebbi in vita di bellezza il vanto.
> Or vedi come son spolpato e franto
> del tempo avaro e della Parca ria :
> fu sogno e vanita la vita mia,
> nacqui piangendo e fui sepolto in pianto. [1]

On May 22nd we paid our farewell visit to St. Peter's. A few friends came and said good-bye to us. In the Esquiline Square, at the foot of the golden steps of Santa Maria Maggiore, we met Godefroid Kurth, who had recently arrived in Rome. We talked about my future prospects, and he told me about *his* struggles and the slights to which he had been subjected amongst historians because he was a Catholic. *Sed digna est his, et majoribus vita aeterna*, he concluded, with a quotation from Thomas à Kempis : "The kingdom of heaven is surely worth that, and more besides !"

The diary has these lines : "The last evening. To-morrow the furniture dealer will come to whom we have sold our furniture, and take it all away. Missa cries when she discovers that it is the last night she will sleep in her Roman bed. On the last evening I stand on the little terrace, face to face with the stars above Rome—for the last time I leave the terrace, fasten the heavy latch of the door and go down the little narrow stair to the other part of the flat. To-morrow night I shall not fasten

[1] Stay ! Whither goest thou ? Look on me awhile
If thou wouldst know me, who and what I am.
There was a time when I was young and fair,
A time when there was one who held me dear.
Now am I broken, gone are my lips and gone their smile,
And to draw near me there are none who care.
A vain dream was my life ; vanished is the dream,
In tears I entered life ; amid tears was I laid here.

this latch any more, to-morrow night I shall not go down this stair."

On May 23rd, at half-past two in the afternoon, I left Rome with my wife and children, and on May 25th, at seven in the evening, we were in Copenhagen. "The first Danish papers at Rostock—at Warnemünde the first Danish 10-örer, thin, yellow-faced, as if with envy. From the deck of the steamer we catch sight of Denmark —at first a dark line, then yellow slopes. Then we reach Gedser—scarlet-coated postmen, everybody speaking Danish, boats are pulled up on the beach; small, low houses with thatched roofs; a beechwood shows light green far away; cyclists are skimming along a level road out towards a low horizon—it is Denmark.

For the sake of my family I decided to leave Copenhagen and to live in the neighbourhood. I rented a small house at Charlottenlund, a small white-washed house with three living-rooms downstairs and four smaller ones upstairs, and had the name *Refugium* painted on the gable wall. Directly opposite the house the beautiful country lane of Ordrup Mount led down between the Vilvorde nursery gardens and the tall sycamores of a large villa, then up to the d'Auchamps' "Mariabo," and further on to St. Andrew's College, which my boys were now to attend, continuing down the hill to the *Ecole française* of the Sisters of St. Joseph, whither I now took Missa every morning. I took her to the gate in the paling surrounding the playground, and then went quickly back up the hill until I reached a place from which I could see her standing on the top step of the stone stairs, waiting to be admitted; before going in she turned and waved her hand once more to me. Later on, when winter had set in, I pulled her to school in a sledge and we were delighted when there were snowdrifts on the school-path; the high sledge cut through them like an ice-breaker, and we reached the school gate bright, rosy and proud of our achievement. . . .

Soon after my return home the d'Auchamps left Charlottenlund. They sold "Mariabo" and moved to Copenhagen. The diary of July 19th says: "Sunday evening. Leave-taking with the d'Auchamps and with 'Mariabo.' This morning they had the last Mass in their chapel, and in a day or two they will go away from here for good. The carpets were off the floors, the discomfort of packing had already begun. We walk home in silence while the mists rise over the meadows. Everything comes to an end." On July 20th: "During the morning once more in the garden of 'Mariabo.' The flower-decked lawns, the fruit-trees, the golden sunshine. . . . Five years have now come to an end."

It was difficult to get a servant in those days, especially when you had several children and lived in a cheap out-of-the-way villa. Time after time it happened that we had no maid, and my wife and I then did all the work of the house for weeks together. The diary contains these notes: "In the evening, after having emptied the refuse bucket, I stand for a moment leaning against the garden fence, gazing towards the golden evening sky in the north. It is the time of the white nights—that time of the year when Stuckenberg and I used to wander out into the world like vagabonds in search of adventures. . . . Later, when it has grown quite dark, I go out on the little balcony in front of the bedroom; the stars have come out and I recognise them—they are Vega, Deneb and Atäir, like three sparkling diamond drops in the light-blue chalice of the summer sky. I see them twinkling and burning, as when I was young and wandered out alone into the summer night. From the dewy fields I hear the chirping of the birds in their sleep. And I go in and say to myself the words of Schack Staffeldt: 'Peace be with thee—but put out thy torch!'" (July 20).

And it was not said in bitterness. I had learned now that which I did not know ten years ago in similar circumstances, that it does not matter *what* one does, if

only one does *that which has to be done*. Be it the emptying of the refuse bucket, or the writing of literary reviews for *Vort Land*.

For I had begun the latter task after my return home. At the same time I also sat working at my writing-table in *Refugium*, and during some weeks in September and October I wrote *The Pilgrim Book*. Finally it was at about this time that I began in a small way to give lectures.

No one could have seemed less fitted than I to be a lecturer, I was so completely lacking in all the qualifications for being effective on a speaker's platform. In the small Catholic Students' Society, *Academicum catholicum*, which I still frequented, it was the duty of every member to take his turn in giving a lecture. There I had read a paper which I had written on Höffding's recently published *Philosophy of Religion* (and which I have since included in my volume of Essays). The reading was received with interest, and when the Students' Association shortly after applied to me for a lecture, I took courage and consented.

It passed off very well. Höffding himself was present and in the discussion afterwards we crossed swords amicably. After the lapse of many years I was again face to face with my old teacher ; my attempt to interpret his philosophy of religion in a particular form of Christian thought was warded off by him with a smiling : "You won't catch me, Jörgensen ! You won't catch me !" But behind the smile he was serious, and the thought-furrowed Socrates' brow of the grey-haired philosopher grew stern, almost angry ; his voice was firm and clear as he concluded his rejoinder to me in words like these : "To the intelligence of modern, occidental Europe a religious explanation is *no* explanation. This is a gain for the development of culture—a step which cannot be retraced—*no matter what else happens*." With this the chief argument of my lecture, the necessity of religion as a basis for morals, was flatly

rejected, and in the worst event, *the doom of morals accepted.* Faced with this logic, which was as hard as a diamond, I stood powerless with my (modernistic !) explanation of dogma as "a working hypothesis, which verifies itself, because in it, and by it alone, the solving of the highest ethical problems becomes possible." I felt my inadequacy, and as a result of the evening wrote in my diary : "Two things are necessary : (1) to have the courage to be what one is ; (2) not to lose courage because one only is what one is" (Oct. 17, 1903).

There was, however, more than one reason for growing despondent. It was at this time that I chose as a pen-name under certain of my newspaper articles the signature "Unicus"—in consideration of the psalmist's words : "for I am alone and poor"—*quia unicus et pauper sum ego. . . .*

Alone and poor. For what income was there from the articles in *Vort Land* or a work like *The Pilgrim Book*, the first edition of which is not yet sold out, after a lapse of fifteen years ? The ten years that now came (1903-1913) were therefore very hard, and I was very much alone. The erstwhile close friend, Mogens Ballin, lived his life rather far from mine ; it was at the time when he founded his workshop and became the well-known artistic silversmith who was greatly in request and whose jewellery was in fashion in modern, radical circles. Those were the years in which, as he said himself, he tried "to break down the monastery walls about him," and with his young wife took part in the artistic and literary life of the capital. He lived in Charlottenlund, like myself, but we saw only little of each other. In spite of my marriage, and in spite of my children growing up around me, I was lonelier than ever.

At this juncture I wish to pay a debt of gratitude before it is too late. I wish to offer my heartiest thanks to the man who in those ten years, from 1903 to 1913, my ten loneliest years, was my never wearied friend and spiritual

guide, my confessor, Father Benedict Fels of the Society of Jesus.

I have had the happiness of knowing many admirable priests, from Padre Felice in Assisi, to Père Samuel at La Verna, but none of them came to mean—could come to mean—so much to me as my confessor at Ordrup Mount. Father Fels was an Austrian, from Vorarlberg, and was of a type differing not a little from his German colleagues. When I came to know him he was well over sixty, but still erect and thin and as active as anyone of twenty. He was small, grey-haired, with a short, white beard, a dark complexion and a pair of brilliant brown eyes. His voice was a decided bass and his language (Father Fels's language !) the most tangled confusion of Danish with a strong German accent, of his mother tongue, of French, Italian, Latin—and when it came to the worst pinch—Spanish. One had to be a good deal of a linguist to get the full benefit of Father Fels's confession discourses, but then they *were* wonderful ! I generally went to see him in his room on Sunday morning—it was always icy cold where he stood (never sat—"Here I stand, *like a horse*," he used to say)—where he stood untiringly at his desk, reading or writing letters. "Father, I should like to confess," and he would lay down the pen, take out his stole, kiss it and put it over his shoulders, sit down on the chair beside the prie-dieu and listen. And when he had listened he would speak.

Generally he spoke a long while. In his deep voice, in the tone in which he spoke, there was a reassuring strength, and the words were like the voice—strong, bracing, comforting. "My dear friend," he used to begin. And then he often told me, forgetting that he had already told me about it before, of the impression which my book, *The Tree of Life*, had made upon him the first time he read it. "That man, I said to myself, is almost sure to become a Catholic. Then I began to

pray a great deal for you." When at last one left him, he gave one at parting some pithy words on which one could live until the next time, such as, for instance: "Remember the psalmist's words, *Expectans expectavi.* Be patient, patient and again patient! It is not the world, it is not *the others* who will be right in the end. I promise you that at last the world, the others, your old friends, *all* will come to you! But you must wait, wait, wait!" Or words like these: "*Sustine Dominum!* Endure the Lord! He wearies you? You would rather not? Then tell Him so—say to Him: 'Lord, Thou weariest me, but nevertheless out of faithfulness I will keep on praying, keep on going to church, keep on receiving the sacraments.' And the day will come again when the Lord will no longer weary you." Or another time, "It seems to you that God is your enemy, that He cannot possibly love you, that He must needs condemn you? Very well. It does not matter, if only you persevere. Keep on, even if it seems to you the blackest lie to say, *In Te, Domine, speravi, non confundar in aeternum!* In Thee, Lord, have I hoped—in all eternity I shall not be put to shame. Say to God when you think He is most terrible: *Et se occideris me, in te sperabo,* 'and though Thou shouldst slay me, yet will I trust in Thee!' He has sought you from afar, He will not lose hold of you. But you must be patient. You must bear suffering and temptation. Oh, my dear friend, bear, bear, bear! Only say, 'Lord, Thou who willest that I should suffer, give me strength to bear it. *Domine da mihi victoriam.*' Life is so short, before you are aware of it, it is *finitum. Tutto passa!* And, as Saint Teresa used to say—*la paciencia todo la alcanza.* Patience overcomes everything. Therefore, first and last, persevere! Bear, bear, bear!"

III

"On the new ferry between Gedser and Warnemünde. Alone in the big, empty, third-class saloon. The ferry drives steadily and calmly across the water, faintly rattling and quivering. The electric lights burn steadily in the milky-white bulbs and are reflected in the polished coffered ceiling, in the white-painted walls. Alongside the yellow table stand curved wooden benches, with alternate lengthwise stripes of red and yellow.

"I sit leaning against the curved back of the bench and I think of my wife, who stayed behind with the children. They are probably all sleeping peacefully now, in the soft light from the hanging lamp in the bedroom. I see the little sleeping faces before me, see the yellow curtains at the windows, and here, on the trembling, rattling and quivering ferry, at one o'clock in the night, feel the peace and stillness at home. . . .

"Then suddenly pictures appear of our first home, of the little attic flat near the College of Agriculture. I see the green plush furniture in the sitting-room, the dining-room, the corridor, the kitchen—it is an early summer morning, and in the kitchen Ingeborg Stuckenberg, my wife and I are beating yolks of eggs with sugar, as a substitute for cream in an early cup of coffee, after a night vigil of wine and verses.

"Then again I see *Refugium*—my wife in the sitting-room, at the piano, singing the folk-song about the murder of Erik Glipping—'Then rode they out to Ribe,[1] and garments did they have them made—for now is the land in peril.' To-day, at about noon, as I was sitting in my study, I looked out across the garden where the lawn was already showing fresh green and saw Missa and her eldest brother coming home from school. They are talking eagerly and stop for a moment before coming in at the gate—fresh, rosy; he all in blue, she all in red. . . .

[1] Pronounced Ree-bé.

And to-night, only a few hours ago, I went on my usual rounds through the house, once more lit the night-lamps in the bedrooms and put a new float in the little ever-burning lamp in the hall before the picture of the Holy Family. The dusk was blue, and outside the windows of the small rooms it was still. A train whistled in the distance.

"That was last evening, that was noon to-day, that was to-night. Now I am sitting alone in the large, empty, third-class saloon. I try to sleep, but it is impossible on the hard bench. I go up on deck to look at the last lights of Denmark."

It was on a night in March, 1904, that I wrote these lines, again on a journey away from Denmark, and this time alone. And this note, this lonely note of faring forth, away from home, was to return in the coming years again and again, until it became the strongest, the only one; that which set its mark upon my life and fulfilled my destiny. "For darkness marks her children, and night knows not forgetfulness," I had written of the Ahasuerus of my youth. . . .

My destination now, as it was eight years ago, was the Benedictine monastery of Beuron in Hohenzollern. I travelled by way of Munich, where I made the acquaintance of Karl Muth, the energetic editor of the newly-founded, very modern Catholic periodical, *Hochland*. The movement, which in various parts of the Catholic world was called "liberal Catholicism," "Reform Catholicism" and "Modernism," was then at its height. The leaders of the movement were, in France, Loisy, Laberthonnière, Blondel and Le Roy; in England, Tyrrell; in Italy, Fogazzaro and Romolo Murri; in Germany, Hermann Schell and Karl Muth. "We Catholics must make it our aim," declared the last-mentioned, in the course of our talk, "to get so far that we shall not any longer be considered second-rate people. We must get out of our literary, artistic and cultural retirement.

We must prove that our opponents are wrong when they assert that Catholicism is incompatible with true, free art and genuine, profound poetry. In the age of Henrik Ibsen and Tolstoi we must not remain at the stage of epigone poetry like Weber's "Dreizehnlinden."

These words might have been spoken from my own heart. Muth was an enthusiastic reader of Selma Lagerlöf and Robert Hugh Benson; it was through his review that Fogazzaro was introduced into Germany, and that Enrica Handel-Mazzetti, the forceful Austrian poetess, found a response amongst Catholics. Gladly did I promise to contribute to *Hochland* and to give *The Pilgrim Book* and the biography of Saint Francis, which I had been preparing since 1902, to Muth's publisher, the enterprising Kösel in Kempten. I too wished for social Christianity and an honest share in the work of culture. It was therefore no longer the picturesque nooks and corners I looked for during my short stay in Munich, but "the most alive modern life," with a profound sense of the wild and terrible realities of the times (March 12).

In Beuron, too, the present time had made its entry. The road leading from the station up to the monastery was now a macadamised street with an asphalt pavement and electric light, and had on either side newly-erected hotel buildings. Yet in spite of my modernism, I was not sorry to find again my comfortable, old-fashioned guest-room—the same in which I had stayed in 1894 and 1896. And when I found myself alone there once again, and monastic peace and monastic stillness again enfolded me soothingly, I felt what I had not known on, the way, "that it was time I came here."

The next morning I paid my old friend, Arch-Abbot Dom Placidus Wolter, a visit, and when I found myself once more sitting opposite to him, and looked at his refined, good and kind face, but so aged, at his hands, which in spite of mittens were red with cold and wrinkled like the hands of an old man, I burst into tears and

found it difficult to speak. "Ah, Father Arch-Abbot will surely live for many years yet," the amiable Father von Oer tried to console me when we were outside the door again. But it was not over Dom Wolter having grown old that I had wept—it was over something deeper; it was over the contrast between him and myself, his life and my life, his soul and my soul. A contrast which wrung my heart when looking at his pure and pious countenance, and which was increased when he told me how, when he could not sleep at night, he often lay repeating to himself the prayer of Francis of Assisi: "*Deus meus et omnia.*" Dom Wolter knew that I was thinking of writing the life of Saint Francis of Assisi, perhaps that was the reason he said this to me. About my undertaking he added: "The life of such a saint ought really only to be written by the consecrated hand of a priest." *Von geweihter Priesterhand* . . . And my hands were *not* consecrated. My hands were *not* holy. My hands were hands that still would fain grasp at earthly joys.

On the same day at noon I sat in the monastery garden. I sat in the sun, in the middle of the white gravel path. Flies were buzzing about me; a starling sang now and then in fluty notes, long and sweetly; there were snowdrops and violets in the long box-bordered beds. There was an atmosphere of spring and stillness and sunshine; outside, beyond the low garden wall, lay the valley of the Danube, and on the other side of the valley rose the mountains, with russet-brown spring forests.

I sat with a book which I had bought in Munich—Lenau's letters—and read in it the poet's love-letters to Sophie. "Ah," I wrote in my diary, "if I could feel for a human being what Lenau felt for his Sophie! Could I too say—like him—to a woman: 'Ich achte kein menschlisches Wesen so hoch wie Dich, und ohne Deine Gegenachtungen müsste mein Herz verkümmern . . . . Du bist nur gross genug, mich an Dir aufzurichten,

o Du Herrliche!' If I could cherish such a feeling, I should be saved!"

As I had felt before Dom Wolter in the morning, I also felt here the gulf that separated me from the high summits, the abyss between myself and love. That love which alone is love, and which therefore alone can save. That love which I was more and more conscious of not possessing. For I had scoffed at life when in my lawless youth I took love in vain. "I look out of the window of my house through the lattice and behold a young man who lacks understanding, who passeth through the street in the dark when it grows late, in the darkness and obscurity of the night. And behold a woman meeteth him, prepared to deceive souls ; talkative and wandering; not bearing to be quiet, not able to abide still at home. And he caught hold of her and kissed her, and she drew him to her with kisses ; for her lips are like a honeycomb and her throat is smoother than oil. But her end is bitter as wormwood and sharp as a two-edged sword. He that hastily goeth after her is led like an ox to be a victim ; he is drawn like a fool to bonds. Stolen waters are sweeter and hidden bread is more pleasant. And he did not know that giants are there and that her guests are in the depths of hell" (Proverbs, Cap. v, vii and ix).

All of us who began our love life in this way, can we wonder that we did not meet a Queen Dagmar or a Beatrice on the roads in the dusk? But we thought it did not matter—that later on we would meet the right woman, the chosen one of our heart, and that then we would purify ourselves from those first embraces, as in a bath before the wedding. Ah, in our miserable ignorance we did not know that the first embrace is irrevocable, for we would not any more read the old book in which all truth is to be found, and in which it is written : "They twain shall be one flesh." *One flesh*—and not only one flesh, but *one soul and one heart*. So that from that hour we are inseparably bound up with the

woman whom we perhaps never saw again after that first night of pleasure—one body with her, one soul with her, one heart with her. And the heart of the harlot *cannot love*. "The cold heart."

I had so often felt this cold heart in my breast and felt it more and more every succeeding year. I had felt it when face to face with Dom Wolter's pure love of God—I felt it here in the monastery garden as I read the German poet's love-letters to Sophie, and below the quotation from Lenau I write another quotation, from the old poem about Tannhäuser:

> *"Ach, könnt ich in meinem Kindersinn*
> *noch einmal von Herzen weinen."*

What do words like these mean, coming from the lips of a married man? Was I not a husband and father of a family like most husbands and fathers?

I question back: What did Leo Nicolaievitch Tolstoi mean by writing *The Kreutzer Sonata*? What did Henrik Ibsen mean by writing *Little Eyolf*? What was the problem August Strindberg lived for and wrote himself to death in trying to solve, and did not solve in spite of his three marriages? Did not Viggo Stuckenberg confess (in the beautiful poem to Ingeborg) that "two who love each other can hurt each other more than all the bitterest enemies taking their revenge all over the world"? "Why do we disagree so easily and why are we so bitter and evil against each other?" the husband in one of Kielland's stories asks his wife. "Can you still remember all the words we have flung in each other's faces? And is that to be called love?"

No, it is not to be called love—it is to be called what it is—selfish passion. Oh, I know the poet's way of comfort—that it can all come right again "only by looking at each other and smoothing each other's hair." Who among us has not tried this consolation, who among us has not known those wondrously sweet

moments when there was a great calm after the storm (as after a thunder shower when you hear the rain-drops dripping) and two pairs of eyes, which but a moment ago flashed the bitterest hate against each other, suddenly grew gentle and shone through their tears, and the angry lips could find no utterance but the stammering of a name and a "Forgive! I did not mean a word of it! I don't know why I said it. . . ."

I know this consolation. I also know that there are those who say that such are the conditions of love between man and woman. *Amantium ira amoris integratio*, said the sage of old, and his words might be roughly translated thus: "First cuffs, then kisses." Nature *will* have it so, it is said; it is after such encounters that the two who love each other reunite and new life comes into being.

I know this comfort, but I do not believe in it. The peace bestowed by an idyllic hour after a conjugal scene is not a good one, and it does not last. The two passions meet for a moment to be sated and are afterwards more separated than ever.

This is so because it cannot be otherwise. Everyone has the life he deserves to have. Everyone has the woman he deserves to have. Everyone has the love he deserves to have.

And upon him who has taken life in vain and taken woman in vain and taken love in vain, upon him life takes its revenge, upon him woman takes her revenge, upon him love takes its revenge.

And he must wear the shackles for the chastisement of fools and remain in the place of torment and the prison until he has atoned for his sin, and he is not set free until he has paid the last farthing. He is like one who has unwarily touched the electric current—he is held fast by the wires and does not escape before the terrible current has burnt him to ashes. He is between the millstones of God's quern and it does not stop until he has

been ground into dust, the dust from which he can again arise.

IV

During some cold days in March, in my monastic cell in Beuron, I wrote the little story which I called *Grass*—the old story about the love of my first youth—the ever new story about "Her."

I also studied the Bollandists in the library of the monastery, with a view to my biography of Saint Francis. Then Valdemar Vedel[1] paid me a visit.

Just at this time he was writing his great work about the Middle Ages and was in need of impressions of a monastery, so he came and I went down to the little station at Beuron to meet him. In the monastery the room usually reserved for bishops and other ecclesiastical dignitaries was prepared for the Danish professor. Vedel was somewhat disappointed at the (comparative) luxury he found there—he had hoped to find a white-washed cell, and to feel that he was in a thoroughly mediæval atmosphere. In other respects he enjoyed his visit and (as it happened, he had arrived during Holy Week) steadily followed all the long, liturgical services.

It was during Holy Week, as I said. In the library I had selected suitable reading for those days, and had found a volume of Henry Suso—had found my way back to my dear German mystics from the period of prepara-

[1] Vedel, Valdemar (b. 1865), author and critic. Took his degree in law in 1882, but was more interested in literature and philosophy. Was a member of the Students' Society (see footnote, vol. i, p. 81), where he was enthusiastic in supporting radical ideas. A pupil of Höffding, he took an active part in the debates organised by the latter, and there met the author of the present work; obtained the University gold medal for his essay on the Relations between Law and Morals. Henceforth devoted himself to literature, and in 1911 became professor of the history of literature at the University. The work alluded to above (*Mediæval Ideals of Culture: Heroes, the Romance of Chivalry, Behind Cloistered Walls, Towns and Castles*) has been described as monumental.

tion ten years ago. "Jesus Christus, unser lieber Herr," wrote the Dominican of Uberlingen, "hat uns erlöst, damit wir in ihm und mit ihm gottförmig würden." And: "die das Kleid unseres Herrn anlegen, das ist, die sich in allen Tugenden üben, und die seine Waffen tragen, das ist, die da geduldiglich alles leiden, was auf sie fällt, das ist ein wahres Zeichen, das sie Gott allerliebst sind."

To become conformed to God, conformed to Christ, to put on Christ. Paul had not spoken differently. Why was I so far from it?

In my diary I wrote: "Wednesday in Holy Week, nine o'clock in the evening. Moonlight, slightly veiled in fog, over the quiet valley. I think of this time last year, when on the evening of Holy Thursday I came from St. Peter's after having seen the relics exhibited for veneration. The moon was standing big and clear over the Tiber. My God, what is to become of me, poor wandering Ahasuerus?

"Holy Thursday. In the evening, in the chapel before *Sanctissimum*. The silence that seems to speak, the peculiar, somehow compelling power issuing from the tabernacle. Thought a great deal and a long while of Him who on this night was betrayed.

"Outside the light of the full moon is cold and clear. Deep, deep stillness. Over the moonlit mountain ridge a few stars in the blue sky. I lean out towards infinity, as but now before *Sanctissimum*. My God, what a wondrous world is that into which we have come! Is it not, in spite of everything, my task to repeat this again and again?"

During Easter week I went on some walking tours with Vedel in the surrounding country, to the old castles along the border of the narrow valley between limestone cliffs in which Beuron is situated and through which the Danube flows—Schloss Bronnen, Schloss Werenwag, Schloss Wildenstein. Owing to the careful forethought

of a local tourist society, the last-mentioned has been transformed into a restaurant, and from my visit there with Vedel I have kept the following souvenir:

"Wildenstein. Calm, late afternoon. The old castle rears itself up steeply from its deep moat, from which the tops of the tall trees do not reach up under the drawbridge. With its walls of large, light-coloured freestone, with narrow windows which are also loop-holes, with roofs of red, scale-shaped tiles, the old castle stands silent and dead in the warm afternoon sun. A chaffinch is singing in the bluish-red beechwood, crows fly screaming across the valley; far away in the broad, undulating hilly country beyond the valley there is a faint sound as of wheels a long way off. A blue line in the furthermost distance is the Black Forest.

"Through narrow, white-washed vaulted passages into the courtyard. The deepest, the most complete silence. Only in the middle of the courtyard the fluting of starlings around some fruit trees. A faint smell of smoke. Sun on yellow walls—and the deep, deep stillness.

"6 p.m. in the *green room*. We have had a supper of bread and cheese and with it drunk a light red wine. The hostess, in her Sunday best, has entertained us; we have seen the firstborn of the house, a boy one year old, and the dog, Flora, has eaten our cheese rinds. The Black Forest clock on the wall gives its cuckoo call of six, and Vedel quotes Heine:

Auf dem Berge steht die Hütte,
wo der alte Bergmann wohnt:
dorten rauscht die grüne Tanne,
und erglanzt der goldne Mond.

In der Hütte steht ein Lehnstuhl,
ausgeschnitzelt wunderlich,
Der darauf sitzt, der ist glücklich,
und der Glückliche bin ich.

"We are both happy. The clock ticks peacefully on the wall. The wind is whistling outside, the mountain ridges bordering the valley of the Danube are veiled in a sunny haze. We take our homeward course down through the ravine behind Wildenstein. Russet-brown woods, grey rocks, a deep blue sky, a boisterous wind, the whirling of last year's withered leaves, and around us the new spring. Oh, world ; oh, eternity !"

Vedel left ; soon after I did so too. He went home to Denmark ; my goal was Uberlingen, the native town of my beloved Henry Suso, and, on the way, the once famous Benedictine abbey of Reichenau on the shores of Lake Constance. We had now entered upon April, spring had fully arrived. I add here a few pages from my spring diary :

"April 13. 6.30 in the morning. The mists are rising over the mountains, the sky is growing blue, the starlings are whistling, there will be sunshine to-day. Later, in the monastery garden. The air is fresh, cold and pure, the sun is shining, the chaffinches are twittering and the starlings are whistling in long, trilling notes from the numerous boxes in the trees in the garden. The mountain woods just opposite are flushed red with buds under the light morning haze, and from the towns up on the plateau the bells are ringing for Mass out over the valley —it is as though one heard the bells of heaven pealing.

"9.42. Departure. At a little after mid-day, before Allenbach, the first glimpse of the towers of Reichenau, remote in the distance over Lake Constance, blue in the light of noon, in front of the mountains, hazy in the mid-day sun.

"Allenbach. On the shores of the bright, lightly, ever so lightly rippling lake people are going about in shirt sleeves, piling firewood in stacks. On the station platform a little girl is running about barefoot. The green meadows reach right down to the shores of the lake.

"One o'clock. On the way across the island of Reich-

enau to Unterzell, where the old abbey once stood. The air is warm, the grass full of daisies, larks are singing. A little distance away stands Constance, which I have just left, with its towers and chimneys. Beyond the lake, which is not wider here than Svendborg Sound, green hilly and wooded country, which reminds me of Taasinge, and snow mountains light as clouds.

"Among vine fields, where men, dressed only in shirt and trousers, and women with large white kerchiefs on their heads, are hoeing, pruning, blinding up. Through well-kept towns, past wayside crosses. In one place outside a little house the scent of sun-heated boxwood and the summery buzzing of flies. The singing of larks overhead and across the lake the soft and deep chimes of bells—the bells in Mannenbach.

"2.30. I am getting near Unterzell. The road goes close to the lake shore. In the deep stillness I hear the silvery clear bells ringing over in Allenbach and the deep-toned ones in Mannenbach. Between Allenbach and Reichenau the narrow, smooth water—the houses on the shore are reflected in it.

"3 o'clock. I have lunch on the food I have brought with me from Beuron—bread, eggs, cheese, a bottle of red wine. My table is a big stone on the beach. On the opposite side of the smooth lake the trains go from Constance to Radolfszell, from Radolfszell to Constance. Out on the lake a great barge loaded with hay—man and wife are slowly rowing it, a little boy is sitting on the top of the load, singing clearly and plaintively across the smooth water—I still hear him faintly and far away after the boat has rounded the point. And I feel infinitely happy, restfully happy, forgetting everything.

After a night in Constance I set out again next morning by steamer to Überlingen. I find a hotel and then go to *das Susohaus*, the "stilgerecht" correctly restored house in which the great mystic was born. (Admission, 1 mark.) Sitting on an oak bench below windows with leaded

panes, I open my Suso and once more read the stern accusation against all those who "know nothing about the eternal love and who therefore think that worldly love brings more joy than it really does, and they believe that no one can be happy except he who has been enticed by the love of the body to bite the silly hook." Schopenhauer could not speak more severely nor rail more acridly at those who had surrendered themselves to "the will to life." Again I ponder the great mystery hidden in the very root of life—the two trees in the garden of Paradise—the two kinds of love—the love that selfishly seeks its own and the love which is the renunciation of self, the death of self—and which alone is love.

In a naïve drawing, sketched by an unskilled hand, the old mystic has expressed his whole thought. One sees first a pair of lovers caressing each other amongst flowers, on a spring day such as we have all known, when the sun was shining and the larks were singing and we had but one wish—to kiss two red lips. The two lovers on Henry Suso's drawing are also kissing each other, but behind them stands *der tod* with his scythe, ready to reap all that their passion of love will sow, and for the slow-witted there is a verse beside it :

Das ist der Welt minne,
die nimpt mit iamer ain ende.

In consequence, in the next picture one sees the man kneeling down (he is the first to think better of it), and we are told his thoughts in the verse :

Minen ker will ich zu got nemen
wann dz ist gar ein kurtzes leben.

Tutto passa—life is short. Therefore let us turn to the blessings of eternity !

The woman also feels it. In the next picture we see her as a nun, and beneath her is written :

Gelassenheit mich beroben wil
wa min ie was zevil.

What she has "had in too great measure," with too much will and zest, she now forsakes. And the next verse tells us about the *Vita nuova* which she now begins, clad in a nun's habit, as before, but with a crucifix in her hand :

Ach, lug wie ich muss sterben
un mit Christo gekrutzget werden.

She must, as the Apostle says, be crucified and die with Christ. But when that is accomplished, the earthly flesh assumes an angel's form, a halo shines about its head, and the soul flies up like a bird and builds her nest in the hand of God the Father :

Ich bin in got vergangen
nieman kan mich erlangen.

"This is the way," says Henry Suso, "the narrow way. There is no other !"

"Yes, for monks," answers a reassuring voice. "For those who have a vocation to the religious life." And perhaps more than one theologian of the present day would agree with this voice. But that was not the opinion of the old black friar—notwithstanding that "from his youth he had had a heart rich in love," as he says in his autobiography, in the book about "the servant of Eternal Wisdom". . . .

Suso's autobiography—I read it for the first time on the other side of the lake, over in Constance, one evening ten years ago, "by the light of two dreary candles in the loneliness of a hotel room." To-night I take it out again, here in my room in Überlingen, by the shores of the same lake, and again "by the light of two dreary candles in the loneliness of a hotel room." I open it and

begin to read the ninth chapter: "Of the word *Sursum corda* and of the three manners of interpreting it of the servant of Eternal Wisdom when he sang that word, *Sursum corda*, in the Holy Mass. The second meaning was on this wise," said he: "In my thoughts I put my own heart and all human hearts before me, and pondered how much joy and delight, love and peace all they enjoy who have given their hearts to God alone, and what pain and suffering, what unrest and woe all they must suffer who worship vain love. And with great earnestness I cried to my heart and to all other hearts: Arise, ye captive hearts and break the chafing bonds of vain love. Arise, ye voluptuous hearts, from your feeble, lukewarm lives! Arise and make yourselves free and turn altogether to the one adorable God: *Sursum corda!*"

This is Suso's thought all through the book (and all his books); this was Suso's will all through his life—"he began to journey through the countries to draw the hearts of men from earthly love and gain them for heavenly love." To him, "earthly love" is all the love of creatures, of a creature alone for its own sake—the love which he briefly characterises thus: "To-day kissing and caressing, to-morrow quarrelling and fighting—*das ist der Welt Minne*—that is what the world calls love"! Why? Because the world does not know what love is! "Ah, eternal wisdom, adorable heart's treasure, if all hearts saw Thee, as I see Thee, then would all vain love die in them. Lord, I cannot but wonder that a loving heart can find rest in anything but Thee, Thou deep wave, bottomless ocean! Lord, my beautiful love, *why dost Thou not show Thyself to them?* Look up, all ye hearts, see how beautiful is my beloved, ye daughters of Jerusalem! Ah, tender God, how blessed is he who loves Thee and who shall never depart from Thee!"

Eternal love did indeed appear to Henry Suso. "It seemed to him in a dream that he was led out to a large, green field and when he had looked about him, he saw Our

Lady sitting in the midst of the green field and holding her Child, Eternal Wisdom, close to her maternal heart. And round the Child's head a word was written in beautiful, ornamented letters, yet no one could read it but those who had it written in their hearts. They could read the word, and it was *Heart's dearest*.

"And the servant read the writing without difficulty, and then the Child looked up and cast such loving glances upon him that the servant felt very deeply how true it was that this little Child was his only love. He pressed the Child Jesus to his heart, his whole soul swelled with fervent love and longing for God, and his heart beat violently in his bosom. Then he awoke and found himself lying with his hand pressed to his heart to calm its loud beating."

Yes, Henry Suso, holy Amandus, servant of Eternal Wisdom—but we have never had such a vision! We are servants too, but we serve for lesser wages—"Sorrow and suffering in soul and body, in their possessions and their honour must they suffer who cherish earthly love!" And we can *not* read the word round the brows of the Child Jesus, that it is "Heart's dearest." For in our heart another name is written.

And yet—how gladly would not we too join in the hymn of praise which thou didst write in that night when thou "hadst turned an angelic image, a noble, loving heart" from temporal love to love eternal:

"*Exultet jam turba angelica!* Rejoice, ye heavenly hosts, play, sing and dance over the glad tidings that I bring! For behold, the son who was lost has come home, the vanished child is found; nay, the dead child has come to life again! The flowery meadow, where the cattle had come in and destroyed everything, is beginning to regain its beauty; the cattle are driven out, the gate is closed, the beautiful flowers are again putting forth leaves. God has come into His own again! Sing aloud, ye heavenly singers, and play your instruments of music;

dance a new dance, that heaven may be filled with exultation. For the Lady Venus has lost the apple of her eye ; her summer wreath has been torn from her head, a song in her honour is silenced. Heigh ho, thou false world, heigh ho, thou traitorous, transitory world ; bend thy head, acknowledge thy defeat ! But let all the heavens rejoice, and all hearts that love God break out into a 'Glory be' for the great wonders which Thou, Lord, dost work in so many a sinful, helpless, hopeless heart !

"Ah, strong and beautiful Lord, Thou art beautiful and adorable in all Thy works, but never more to be loved and praised than when Thou dost restore us human beings to grace and drawest us to Thyself. Ah, beloved Lord, it is a marvel to behold—those hearts that before embraced the flesh, Lord, they now love and embrace Thee with infinite desire. Lord, it is a wonderful and a joyous thing to hear—those who before could hardly endure themselves, they now deny themselves something ; they who before loved their body too much, they now regard it as a strange guest ; they who before burned only with earthly desire, they now crave nought but to please God ; they who before in their anger were like ravening wolves, they now forgive like meek lambs. Yea, they who before were bound and oppressed by the sadness and despondency of their chastising conscience as with bands of steel, behold, gracious Lord, they now mount freely up above all that the realm of earth can bestow, they feel free and happy in the heavenly fatherland and marvel that they could ever have been wounded by the dark power of false love. . . ."

Die finstere Macht der falschen Minne. . . . I closed my book upon these words and went to the window. My hotel was situated close to the quay and I had taken a room overlooking the lake. I put out the candles by which I had read ; the spring evening outside was still

semi-light beneath a grey cloudy sky. People were standing in small groups talking under the half-opened chestnut trees on the quay. A boat approaches, runs in near a low landing-stage, and puts a couple ashore—young people—he gives her his hand, and she springs lightly up on the planks of the bridge. Then the boat is rowed away again, out across the blue-grey water. Here and there lights are lit on the dark coast, which is outlined low against the sombre sky.

I take a chair and sit down beside the window. For a time everything is still, only the faint, regular lapping of the lake against the stones of the breakwater. Then a sound arises far away, pounding beats of the piston rod as of a steamer approaching. It proves to be a little motor boat which runs into the harbour soon after and discharges a party of happy Überlingers, who are received by their children, wives, sweethearts and friends, and chattering gaily and loudly, they disappear along the harbour square.

I remain sitting. It is growing dark, it is getting late. Again the sound of a steamer—this time it is really the steamer from Constance, the same by which I arrived this morning. She glides in like a palace of light, with trembling columns of fire under her in the water. Electric lamps are lit at the landing-stage, a new crowd of Überlingers go ashore, new reception.

Then the steamer drums away, towards Meerseburg, and stillness reigns once more. Someone is singing out on the water, further and further away. At last that dies away too, and the only sound is that of the waves washing against the shore and of a leaping fish. Over on the dark coast opposite two lights are still lit. Low down in the horizon is the glimmer of Constance. Now someone is rowing in from the grey lake, the strokes of the oars come nearer, grow fainter, draw near again and die away. Stillness, only the distant cry of a bird, a long way out across the water. . . .

This night in Überlingen—my only night in Überlingen.

Holy Amandus, thou servant of Eternal Wisdom, pray for all of us who falter between the false love and the true!

V

I followed the course of the Rhine and took the road through northern Switzerland. At Einsiedeln I called upon the great Catholic publisher, Benziger, who wished to publish my two books about Rome (*Roman Mosaics* and *Pictures of Roman Saints*) in German. I stayed at the famous old Benedictine abbey (founded by Saint Meinrad) and there, at the request of the poet-monk, Father Joseph Staub, I gave my first lecture in German. The subject was comprehensive, Danish literature in the nineteenth century, and it was doubtless the first time that the names of Oehlenschlager,[1] Ingemann,[2] Grundtvig,[3] Paludan-Müller[4] and Sören Kierkegaard[5] were heard under the rococo vaultings of Stift Einsiedeln. My audience was composed of the monastery students—the Meinrad ravens, as they liked to call themselves, in allusion to the old legend about the saint. They seemed to be pleased; after I had been their guest at a festive supper at one of the hotels in the town, they even came with torches and lanterns and escorted me home to the monastery.

[1] See footnote, vol. i, p. 53.

[2] See footnote, p. 250.

[3] See footnote, vol. i, p. 22.

[4] Paludan-Müller, Frederik (1809-1876). Descended from a line of Lutheran ministers, from whom he inherited his intellectual and spiritual gifts. Chief poem, *Adam Homo*, in which he sternly castigates the Danish national character. Also chose mythological and Biblical themes for his poems, in which his style is marked by a harmonious purity, though it is also frequently monotonous. In Danish literature Paludan-Müller is regarded as unique in his exalted ethical earnestness and his pure spirituality.

[5] See p. 32.

From Einsiedeln to Basle and from Basle again back to German territory. At Freiburg im Breisgau I visited my friend Franz Peters from Berlin; he had now received an appointment in the large publishing firm of Herder. We went on some walking-tours together in the Black Forest, to Föhrenthal, Glotterthal, Affenthal. We set out early in the morning—the mists were still hanging over the valleys—"die Hasen kochen ihre Suppe,"[1] said little Mariele, Franz Peter's eldest daughter —she and her brother Bubi accompanied us on the tour. Spring had fully come now; beech and elm were in leaf, the birches showed light green amongst the dark firs. In the peasants' gardens that we passed crown imperials were in bloom; cherry trees and peach trees blossomed along the garden walls; the children skipped hither and thither about us grown-ups and gathered wood-sorrel, cuckoo flowers, violets and "Waldmeister" (woodruff). "Sieht Kinder, wie der liebe Gott alles wieder so schön gemacht hat," said my friend to his children. Hanging on a wayside cross that we passed was "der liebe Gott" Himself, and in the midst of the joy of spring we stopped and read *God's Plaint*, as it was written in old Gothic lettering on a cracked tablet beneath the foot of the Cross:

"I am beautiful; few are they who love me.
I am noble; the fewest have any regard for me.
I am almighty; who seeks help from me?
I am Wisdom; who follows my counsel?
I am eternal; why is that which passes away preferred?
I am the Way; few are they who walk in it.
I am the Truth; few are they who believe me.
I am Life; they are but few who desire me.
I am Light; only few seek for enlightenment.
I am the Judge of all the world and soon—and how hardly—must I condemn these ungodly ones!

[1] "The hares are cooking their soup."

Ich bin ewig—warum wird das Vergängliche vorgesetzt? These words were still burning in my soul when I sent a last greeting next morning from the window in the train to the wonderful traceried spire of Freiburg Minster and to Schlossberg, rising vernally green in a delicate heat haze, Schlossberg, where Alban Stolz, the great Catholic writer, had "herumgegeistert."[1]

In Mainz I called upon my other German publisher, Kirchheim. It was he who had published Countess H. Holstein Ledreborg's translation of *The Truth and Falsehood of Life*, *Le Livre de la Route*, *Parables*, *Eva* and *The Sacred Fire*. I heard a Mass in the Romanesque five-naved cathedral, and then went on board the Rhine steamer. My next station on the way home was the Benedictine monastery of Maria-Laach in the Eifel mountains; to get there you go from Andernach by the little railway to Niedermendig.

Maria-Laach is one of the monasteries founded from Beuron of which there are not a few here and there in Europe. In the guest-cell which I occupied for some days in the monastery by the Laacher See, I found on the table a book about Beuron and the movement which had issued thence, and I noted down the following:

Beuron was founded in 1863 by the two brothers Maurus and Placidus Wolter. In 1875 the Kulturkampf came and the monks had to go into exile until 1887. During this exile Maredsous in Belgium was founded in 1876, St. Thomas at Erdington in England in 1878, Emaus in Prague in 1880, Seckau in Steiermark in 1883. In 1888 the first convent of nuns was founded (St. Gabriel's in Prague). Dom Maurus died in 1890; the younger brother, Placidus, became Arch-Abbot in his stead. The convent of Maredret in Belgium and the monastery of Maria-Laach were founded in 1893, the latter in the ancient abbey which had belonged to the

[1] Perhaps this may be rendered as: enjoyed himself intellectually and spiritually. TR.

Jesuits before the Kulturkampf. The latest off-shoots of Beuron are *Regina Coeli* on Mont-César, near Louvain, and St. Joseph's in Gerleve, near Billerbeck in Westphalia. Finally, a large new convent of nuns, St. Hildegard at Eibingen, was almost ready for occupation; outside Rüdesheim I had seen its walls amongst the red vine-fields and the dark-green cornfields on the mountain side.

"At this time last year I was in the Rieti valley—in Greccio, Fonte Colombo, Poggio Bustone," I wrote in my diary. "It is cold here in Maria-Laach and my cell is big and dark. But from its windows I look out upon a green orchard where a fountain is softly plashing, and white chickens are running about in the tall grass" (April 26).

"I read on in the book about Beuron (it was written by Father Odilo Wolff) and found some words of my old friend, Dom Placidus, about his and his brother's very first attempt to found a monastery (in Materborn, near Cleve): 'It was in the middle of winter. The walls of the cell glistened with ice, the beds were extremely primitive: two blocks of wood with planks laid over them. The other furniture was just as deficient and poor. It was a hard beginning! God be praised for everything, above all, because He gave us courage and strength to endure it.' I read about the many years of patient labour to found Beuron; when at last everything seems to be going on well and in good order the expulsion comes and the twelve years of exile." This too is borne with the faith that moves mountains, the faith that makes a mustard seed germinate and grow into a mighty tree. The diary has these lines: "Nine o'clock at night. After a clouded and changing day has come calm moonlight. The sky is clear and light blue and a few stars have come out—Cassiopeia, Capella—above the dark woods. The moon is shining on the five Romanesque towers of the church and on the south wall of

the wonderful *Paradise*.[1] I think of myself and of others. I like coming to a monastery and being a guest in it when everything has been set in order, when it is all beautiful and solemn. In the same way, I want heaven—but without the way to heaven, which the others do not shun" (April 27).

I stayed at Maria-Laach a few days and continued my studies of the Beuron monks. On January 1st, 1862, the congregation consisted of three members—the two brothers Wolter and their only novice, Dr. Roman Sauter (afterwards abbot at Emaus). On January 1st, 1902, the congregation had 226 priests, 79 theological students, 16 novices, 15 postulants, 259 lay brothers, 82 lay brother novices and postulants, 49 choir sisters, 12 choir sister novices, 43 lay sisters and 11 lay sister novices. Altogether 677 monks and 106 nuns—a fine growth in only forty years!

Father Odilo Wolff, from whose book I took excerpts, did not omit to mention that the Beuron congregation, and Maria-Laach in particular, enjoyed the favour of His Majesty the Emperor William II. On June 19th, 1897, the Kaiser visited Laach for the first time. He found that the altar was not worthy of the old Romanesque church, which had been restored with expert knowledge by the monks, and therefore promised them a new one. The imperial gift came in March 1899, and two years later, on April 25th, 1901, the sovereign came in person to see how the altar looked. It was on this occasion that William II made a speech to the assembled monks, in the course of which he said: "Be assured that in the future too my imperial favour will rest upon your Order, and that wherever men gather together to devote themselves to religion and to spread it abroad they may be sure of my protection." A sign of this imperial

[1] The Paradise is the outer court enclosed by columns, to be seen in front of the main door of ancient Christian basilicas and Romanesque churches.

graciousness was shown the very same year (September 21st, 1902) when the Abbot of Laach, Dom Willibrord Benzler, was called upon to fill the difficult position of Bishop of Metz.

It was beautiful at Maria Laach, and Abbot Willibrord's successor, young Dom Fidelis von Stotzingen, was extremely kind to the Danish pilgrim. But it was not Beuron—"ach, Thal von Beuron, wenn ich dein gedenke !" Still less was it Denmark. The diary says :

"April 28, 1.30 p.m. I am lying on a slope covered with tall grass and woodruff, beneath young, newly-opened beech trees. The sun is shining, there is a slight breath of air, the cuckoo is calling in the distance and the five grey Romanesque towers of Maria-Laach stand out on the background of the green forest, newly come into leaf. The larks are singing unceasingly above the grey or green fields between me and the monastery. Behind a row of poplars the Laacher See shows palely blue, on the further side of it is a green beechwood.

"But I am homesick. I cannot stand the loneliness any longer, nor the continual speaking German, and least of all the everlastingly same information to be given about Denmark and Danish Catholicism. I must get home again—there is nothing else to be done !

"6.30 p.m. After letter-writing and rosary, contented and with a mind at ease, in the monastery garden. Everywhere, in the beds and along the walls, fruit trees in rows and in espalier, in half and full blossom—cherries, pears, apples, peaches. The forcing frames are full of lettuce, parsley and other greens ; some of the lay brothers are bedding out plants in long borders, others follow after with watering-cans. A faint, delicate scent of fruit-blossom fills the still air under the grey evening sky.

"I go on, to the fish pond, on the banks of which there is a small grove ; in the undergrowth there are larkspurs, cowslips and white anemones. A blackbird is singing.

Fishes leap up and the cuckoo calls a long way off. A bird, flying at a great height, is reflected in the calm water—an instant, and it is gone!"

I left the monastery the next morning. It was a Sunday—with all the purity, joy and peace of a Sunday in a monastery. "Eight o'clock, morning. The sweet scent of young foliage and of fruit blossom penetrates from outside and fills the cloister. I go into the garden, after a short way the scent yields to the smell of box and thuya, but comes back stronger, sweet like the scent of balsam poplar. It also contains a scent of the hyacinths and tulips in the beds on the lawn. The sky is lightly grey, a few raindrops fall through the still, warm air. A young novice is sitting in his rough black habit on a bench by a murmuring brook, reading. Birds are chirping, pigeons are cooing; from the wooded, light-green mountain, slightly veiled in mist, rising above the trees in the garden, the cuckoo is calling. Distant, deep-toned church bells begin to ring, but quickly fall silent."

On this journey down the Rhine I paid one more visit to a religious house, to see "die Schwestern von der Busse und der göttlichen Liebe" on the island of Nonnenwerth, at Remagen. The whole island is owned by the Sisters; they cultivate the eight acres of land which it comprises themselves. They came here only fifty years ago, but although the Order is new (founded by Pauline, sister of Mallinokrodt, the celebrated leader of the Centre Party), it has developed vigorously, extending even to India and to North and South America. The rule followed by the Sisters is that of the Tertiaries of Saint Francis; they have great freedom of movement and those sisters who are senior mistresses have studied for three years at the university and passed their examinations with distinction.

For the Sisters of Penance and of the Divine Love are teachers, and the convent is one of their numerous boarding-schools for young girls. I was thinking of the

possibility of placing my daughter with them and this was the reason of my visit.

The arrival itself charmed me. You are ferried across the narrow arm of the Rhine separating the island from the mainland, and you glide over a smooth and calm sheet of water towards a green shore under drooping foliage—it is like coming to the island of the blessed. I arrived late in the afternoon and was at once invited to be present at the May devotions in the bright, festive chapel, thronged with young girls in Sunday attire. Afterwards, under the guidance of the Mother Superior, Mother Dominica, I was shown the house. First the sixteen—16!—piano rooms, in which sixteen music students could practise at the same time. Then the lesson class-room, the room for drawing classes, the handicrafts rooms, the dormitories. In all of them the windows were open to the calmly flowing Rhine, everywhere the pure air was filled with the scent of foliage and the fragrance of flowers.

In company with the chaplain of the house I thereupon explored the whole island, which had been transformed into a park and garden. Immediately after my arrival a heavy shower had fallen and had swept the fruit blossoms into heaps along the edge of the gravel walks. After the rain the whole island steamed with warmth and moisture and was fragrant with the scent of foliage, of flowers, of poplar, of birch. By leafy walks and along paths cut through the green meadow we reached the outermost point of the island. The Rhine glided past, silver-grey, on one side was the castle of Rolandseck, on the other Drachenfels and the Siebengebirge, and nestling up against the mountain the town of Honnef, where the bells were just ringing for Benediction. We went back to the house by the promenade along the shore towards the Rhine—young girls were sitting on the benches reading—a steamer crowded with Bonn students on a Sunday excursion sailed close past us—

there were greetings and wavings of handkerchiefs from the deck, to which the young girls responded by waving in return.

I had supper with the kindly ecclesiastic, who was interested in literature. The window was open to the garden, and during the meal the dusk fell. The laughter of the young girls rang clear for a short while yet in the calm evening air, then they were called inside. The bats began their noiseless circling, black against the light air. Then came the first trills of the nightingale and behind the sombre trees the silver bright Rhine glided slowly past. "A feeling of the grandeur, the sacredness, the value of life," I wrote in the semi-darkness across a page of my diary.

The next morning I was in Cologne, heard Mass in the *Dom*, and called on the editor of the *Kölnische Volkszeitung*, Dr. Cardauns. I left immediately after mid-day, sending a farewell greeting from the train to the two huge towers of the cathedral. At Düsseldorf it began to rain; at Münster it was pouring and beginning to be cold; at Osnabrück I said good-bye to the last Catholic cathedral for this while. It was the north again—the beech-woods of Westphalia had not yet come into leaf, and far out over the vast and dark Lüneburg heath the first windmill was slowly and mournfully turning its wings, grey against the grey sky. In the evening at Hamburg there was the Danish train, and at five o'clock next morning a grey, sad, bleak day dawned over the low-lying, wet, Danish country. Trees stood rocking in the wind on the ridges of hills and against the low banks nestled small troll-like houses. I was at home again.

Geiler von Kaiserberg has said that "a true pilgrim is always at home in his heart, and at his home-coming he receives a festive welcome." Away in the foreign country I had longed for home and I was welcomed with the flag hoisted on its staff, with newly-raked gravel walks in the garden and the children arrayed in their finest.

Again I went in and out of the house I had called *Refugium*.

VI

One of the first things I saw, on opening a newspaper the day after my return home, was the following announcement by "Sommerlyst Koncertsal." "To-night from 8 till 12 the author, Viggo Stuckenberg, Seelig, Lundberg, Johannes Herskind, Olga Hofman and Umberto Prandini. Admission free."

I remembered the Sommerlyst Koncertsal very well from my early years in Frederiksberg—on many a green and wet evening in May Börge[1] and I had been there and consumed three sandwiches with which we drank a glass of beer, while a music hall girl shrieked on the platform. And on that platform now stood the poet of "Valraven" and read—what? I imagined that perhaps in his proud despair he flung "Tue Bengtson's Ballads" at the heads of the sandwich-eaters, but dared not go there to see. I knew that all was over between Ingeborg and him, that she was far away on the other side of the world, and that he was married again. We met one day in town quite inadvertently, he was coming away from Gyldendal's publishing offices, I was on my way thither. I saw that he had changed a good deal, he had grown broader and stouter, reminding one of his father, the warden of the hospital. We both made a movement as if to stop, but refrained, only bowed and passed each other.

On November 11th, 1904, Ingeborg Stuckenberg died. After the divorce she had gone out to South Africa, where Börge had settled and become a well-to-do painter and decorator, a married citizen with a home of his own. There she spent the last period of her life, there she ended her days.

A little more than a year after, on December 6th, 1905, Viggo died too, only forty-two years old. The news

[1]Viggo Stuckenberg's younger brother.

was brought to me by a common friend, the artist, Louis Find, and in the evening when I was alone all the memories broke like wounds and bled afresh:

"It will be a mild and moonlit evening. The tops of the leafless lime trees stand black against a blue atmosphere and large white clouds. The silver bright moon—a few big stars—memories of the old days, of old wanderings, of old verses—the pale moon-blue of the December night lay over the city like a marble dome—alone I drifted about here and there—in one of the houses there was still a light—a window rattled and I heard a woman's voice singing Solveig's gentle songs . . . . The window in Wiedeweltsgade, Ingeborg's voice—and in the street I who go in—the gate bangs after me, and at the sound the music stops and I know that now they are looking up: 'It's Johs!' Ah Ingeborg! Ah Stuck![1] Where are you now? Where are you both?

"Eleven o'clock. The moonlight is stronger, the sky is blue and mild, the pale stars twinkle softly and remotely. Low down above the black fans of the lime tree domes in the avenue sparkles Arcturus. And I think of this verse of Viggo:

> It is as though the sun,
> from the summer's time of flowers,
> like a grain of sand runs down
> to the bottom of the ocean.

"And of this verse of my own:

> A star trembled near the border line of heaven,
> wearied of watching, tired of sleeping,
> and the moon light spread out vast and blue,
> watch over budding forests keeping.

"Stuck, Stuck—you are not there any more, do not see it with me, do not feel it with me any more! We

[1] It should be noted that the u in Stuckenberg's name is pronounced like the u in push.

were two, before, to look up at the stars and love them. Now I am left behind alone."

The next day I went out to Frederiksberg Hospital. There, in the mortuary stood a narrow, white coffin, bearing a card with the name of Stuckenberg. The lid was removed and there he lay, dead amongst other dead in his coffin amongst other coffins. The attendants turned aside the white linen that covered his face and I saw once more the fine, lofty brow, the delicately curved nose, the firm, almost obstinately closed lips. But the beautiful, dark blue eyes were closed for ever. They were never more to give me a radiant welcome and the fine lips were never more to say: "Johs!"

I went out of the hospital and along the road by which we had so often walked at night—Ingeborg and my wife in front and we two men behind. The ground was built up on either side now—amongst old, neglected gardens with moss-covered trees and withered grass large factories had sprung up, with yellow-brick buildings, asphalted squares, managers' houses . . . . The road was well kept, newly gravelled, provided with electric arc lamps.

A long way out I reached a dilapidated peasant farm, one of those in the outlying parts of Copenhagen which is only waiting for the speculative builder to come. The window-panes had once been white-washed, afterwards broken, and at last the windows had been boarded up inside. The mossy, thatched roof had had to be mended here and there with a slab of blue slate.

The new, well-gravelled road ends here, at a bridge across a small stream flowing rustily along between scrap heaps on one side and a withered grass embankment on the other. The stream disappears into a dark country of grey and brown fields; in one place a long way out an excavating machine stands steaming, farthest away rows of bare poplars, as thin as birch twigs, and the two large containers of the gas-works. There

was a glint of sunshine a moment ago, a hint of spring in the air, our muddy, lark-singing, Danish spring! But now the sky is grey and cold, a bleak wind is blowing, softly stirring the withered grass in the ditch.

As I stand here gazing, all the unutterable melancholy of my youth sweeps over me. This is the country to which Viggo and Ingeborg, Albert Gottschalck and I belonged. I look out upon it once more for the last time, then I turn away and bid it farewell. I bid my last farewell to my youth and feel that I have been left behind alone.

GOD'S QUERN

Si je me sens puni, c'est que je le dois être.
VERLAINE.

I

I ought to write—and yet I can not,
For like a woman gazing in the glass,
I gaze upon the face of destiny,
And yet I know my destiny so well.

It is a sunny day long years ago,
Flowers are blooming, bees are humming,
In the joiner's workshop of our neighbour
The men are whistling at their work.

I was a boy, and, Mother, you were young!
I see you still in your print gown of blue,
You smile and beckon and I run to meet you,
Together we have supper in the garden.

Then came a day, your boy grew far too big,
He learned so much, and was to learn still more.
The boy then left his childhood's home
And all his happiness on earth was gone.

And yours too was gone, oh dearest Mother;
The weary years of suffering began
The day when you came with me to the train,
And only now I see what must have been your pain.

For when at Christmas home again I came
You would have kissed me, such as was your wont.
I turned my cheek to you—you looked at me :
"My boy, dare you no longer offer me your lips ?"

And you perceived an icy frost had struck
My soul and killed my heart while yet in bud,
One night of autumn chill when all was death.

Then, Mother, did you bend your head in grief,
You shuddered, Mother, paled, spoke not a word,
You understood that he, the closest to your heart,
Had into the land of darkness strayed.

You had dreamed of happiness so pure for me,
Had seen yourself grown old and bent,
Yet like a day that ends in clouds of gold ;
Your children's children playing at your knee.

It was a dream—was never to be more ;
A blight had struck the seed of generations new
And hopelessly you saw the bitter truth ;
The springs of life were tainted at the source.

Thus life's purest joy was taken from you,
Year after year to you new sorrows bringing,
Until the night, I sat beside your bed,
And into death did see you slowly gliding.

Then, Mother, your last look you bent on me :
"It is as though I hear the church bells ringing,
As on Sunday morning in the early days
When you were little. Is to-day a Sunday ?"

"It is not Sunday ? For it was that so oft—
The sun was shining and you wore your summer suit.

The bells were ringing—you were my own dear
boy.
You were my boy—I was a happy mother.

"I was so happy—I was—alas, I *was !*
The sun is not shining now—and you have grown
to manhood,
You were fair-haired when you were a little boy,
We were in the garden—you were sitting on my
lap.

"Ah, all things perish—all is swept away—
I was young but now, and I was strong and happy.
It was yesterday—and it was Sunday,
And now for my last sleep I am preparing.

"My son, are you kneeling ? Where is your head ?
In the old days when you were in your cradle
I dreamed for you so many lovely things,
I had great thoughts of you—but I was mistaken !

"It is all over—nay, you must not weep ;
Sufferings, distress and fear are over—
I hear the bells ; then it *is* a Sunday !
They are ringing—you are sitting on my lap."

You died, dear Mother, and I was alone.
And like a woman, gazing in the glass,
I gaze into the face of destiny,
And yet I know my destiny so well.

II

It was on an October evening in 1906, in a cell in the monastery of Beuron, that I wrote the foregoing poem in German. Why in German—and why again at Beuron? Because the German language had now for three or four

months sounded in my ears and been on my tongue, in my thoughts, day after day, and it was easy and natural for me to express myself in it. At first I had stayed at Frauenberg, in the Franciscan monastery above Fulda, and had finished the book about Saint Francis of Assisi which I had begun in Denmark. I wrote the last half—the two sections, *God's Fiddlers* and *The Hermit*—from July 16th to August 16th, and when I had finished I fell ill, of an indefinite and complicated ailment which took the form of pains at the heart and *angina pectoris*. In order to get over it I went first for a week to another Franciscan monastery in the neighbouring Salmünster, after which I was invited by my old friend, Father Willibrord Verkade, to come and pay him a visit in the little village of Aichalden in the Black Forest, where he was just then engaged in painting frescoes in the parish church. It was natural that afterwards I accompanied my artist friend (whom I had not seen for twelve years) down to Beuron—then going for a while to the Franciscan monastery at Gorheim near by, but again returning to Beuron.

At the Benedictine monastery there had been some surprise at my frequent visits, for which I did not offer any explanation. I was told that the Arch-Abbot had asked wonderingly: "Why does Jörgensen make pilgrimages here so often, instead of staying quietly at home?" This time, moreover, I did not occupy my usual cell; they gave me a room in the domestic offices, a sort of servant's room, cosy and sunny, however, with a view over the valley of the Danube and with the lichened branches and autumn-tinted leaves of an old plum tree outside the window. One evening as the dusk was falling heavily and lonesomely I wrote these verses there, as they arose one by one in my mind. I had only to write them down, as one who is plucking fruit only has to pluck it.

And they were fruit, these verses—fully ripened

October fruit;' they were the fruit of the forty years I had now lived.

Late in the year 1904 at home in Svendborg, together with my two sisters, I had watched three long nights (and yet far too short) by the bedside of our dear mother and seen her pass away. One calm, mild and foggy November morning she died—just as the bells of our childhood—and the bells of her childhood—were ringing from the church of Our Lady. She had always loved those bells—during the last days before I came, and before she was yet too ill, she had lain enjoying them—"it is like Christmas morning when you were little," she had said to my sisters; adding, a little while after: "You don't know how good it is to have children —but also how bitter!" At these words she was perhaps thinking of one of us who had lived far from home and who had no communication with it—but assuredly she was thinking of me—of all that she had dreamed about me, and which had turned out quite differently. "I wanted so much to have seen your children, the little ones whom I do not know. . . . But tell your wife, Johannes, that I have *loved* her," she said to me when I came—and came alone. Ah, Mother, *whom* did not your warm, deep heart love? Our burning tears fell fast as on the third morning we laid the dear, silver-grey head to rest and folded the hands. "It will never stroke us again, the good, little hand," said my eldest sister.

That had happened, and a great deal besides had happened, during the last couple of years. I moved with my family to a larger villa, which I bought, in Charlottenlund. And I transferred my literary activities from *Vort Land* to *Nationaltidende*, where my work consisted partly in writing an article on literature every Sunday, partly in sending home correspondence from abroad. In the latter capacity, as correspondent, I went, now to Essen to interview strike leaders (in January, 1906), now to Leipzig to describe the Leipziger Messe,

now to Vesuvius, after the great eruption at Easter, 1906. My wife came with me on this last-named journey, and besides Naples we visited Capri and Sorrento, on the way home staying for a week with the Benedictines at Monte Cassino, where the old master of the Beuron painters, Father Desiderius Lenz, showed us much kindness. At Firenze we met Mogens Ballin and his wife; it was the first and last visit of the two, for Marguerite Ballin died in April of the following year. It was the first time Mogens and I were together in Italy since Assisi and La Rocca, and one evening at Fiesole, where the Ballins were staying, we revived the memories of old times. "Look, Signor Giovanni," said Mogens, "how delicately the olive foliage is outlined against the sky—as when you go down to San Damiano." It was in memory of this sojourn at Fiesole that Mogens presented the beautiful silver lamp now hanging before the altar in the little Franciscan church at the top of the hill in Fiesole, and in which his and Marguerite's names are engraved.

I collected the memories of this journey in the book *From Vesuvius to the Skaw*, which, like nearly everything I wrote now, was translated into German by Countess Holstein Ledreborg. I felt that the circle in which I was known and appreciated was growing larger; it was not only in Catholic Germany that "der dänische Dichterphilosoph" (as Lorenz Krapp had called me in an essay) had achieved an acknowledged position in the world of letters, but also in France, where Téodor de Wyzewa had introduced me in 1904 through an article in the *Revue des deux Mondes*. Even in Denmark they were beginning to reckon with me—Johannes Marer engaged me for his literary evenings, and in several other quarters I was called upon to give lectures, in Copenhagen as well as in the provinces and in the country. Edvard Holm[1]

[1]Holm. Peter Edvard (1833-1915). Professor of History at the University of Copenhagen. In his historical works devoted his energies

obtained for me a grant from the Carlsberg Fund[1] to enable me to publish my book on Saint Francis of Assisi and in 1905 it was I who, in spite of violent preliminary agitation against "the Catholic," welcomed the new students of the year at the Students' Society.

These events were all victories, greater or lesser, and seen from outside my existence appeared quite brilliant. It was noticed by the residents of the neighbouring villas in Charlottenlund that "the author" had come home and had been met by his children at the station. On sunny summer mornings "the author" might be seen sitting at work on his verandah, which the Virginia creeper was beginning to cover. Then the bell would ring for lunch (a cow-bell brought home from Italy and bought at Piazza Montanara), and after lunch the author and his wife would drink coffee together on the verandah and stroll in the garden before he left by the train to town, to go to the offices of *Nationaltidende*. In the afternoon his boys would practise football playing in the road or go out on their bicycles, and prancing round them, wagging his tail and begging the boys to take him with them, was the family's big dog, a thoroughbred Great Dane, bought at the Zoological Gardens.

This was what the world saw, this was the façade. While the reality was my continual roaming hither and thither abroad in voluntary exile month after month, eating the bitter bread at a stranger's board, and walking on stairs that are so heavy to tread, because it is not on

particularly to the history of Denmark and Norway during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Was chairman of the Committee of Administration of the Carlsberg Fund from 1889-1909.

[1]Carlsberg Fund. Founded in 1876 by Mr. J. C. Jacobsen, a wealthy brewer, with the object, partly of continuing the research work of the Carlsberg Laboratory, partly of aiding the work carried on in the natural sciences, mathematics, philosophy, history and philology. Aided by the Carlsberg Fund it has been possible for Danish scientists to carry out research work of many different kinds, such as, for instance, the archæological research at the castle of Lindos on Rhodos. It has also been at the expense of the Carlsberg that Danish historians have copied out all papal letters in the Vatican concerning Denmark.

them that dear little feet patter up and down, not those to which little hands cling with tiny fingers between the rails of the banisters. Reality was the monastery cell in Beuron, in which I wrote that German poem, and reality was the lonely guest-room at Salmünster, where I sat one autumn evening, leaning my elbow on the window-sill and watching the children at play in the street below:

> But it is not you, my little Steffen,
> It is not Erik and Knud and Kjeld.
> You are so far away, I cannot see you,
> Can not come up and see you in your bed
> And get a kiss and hear you say good-night,
> And say to you, Good-night, my little boy.

At last my home-sickness grew too strong, and as the time of my birthday drew near I resolved to keep it in Denmark. I had many good memories of this from the old times. At home in Svendborg I was allowed to invite whomever I liked for afternoon chocolate[1] and supper—and generally five or six of my school friends came, chief among them being the indispensable Albrecht. In the afternoon we would go to one of the woods and play at Red Indians or (at my suggestion—and following Stanley's example!) we would go on exploring expeditions along the banks of the brook through the autumn-tinted woods, ploughing through thick layers of fallen leaves and breaking a way through withered and tangled copse, until at length we reached the large stone drain under the road, from which the brook flowed out, and we felt as if we had discovered the sources of the Nile. Then we would come home in the crisp evening air with appetites that made short work of one large dish of sandwiches after the other. My mother and our old servant Maren would stand in

[1] A national custom in Denmark on birthdays—observed alike in cottage and castle, etc.

the pantry incessantly cutting the good, fresh ryebread, the boiled beef and the pickled cucumbers which were laid over it in fine, narrow strips. Uncle Jörgen would come in and pay us smiling little visits (we were all of us his pupils); I still remember one evening when he came in and said: "It's snowing, boys!" and we ran to the window and in the lamplight saw the first snow of the year whirling down outside and sticking in moist flakes to the panes. . . .

Such was my birthday in Svendborg. Later on, when I had left home and lived at Christianshavn, this day continued to be a festive one for me. The thick birthday letters and the parcel with the birthday presents would arrive the evening before, but I always laid the letters unopened on my table and did not read them until the next day. On opening the parcel next morning it was found to contain one or two books from Uncle Jörgen, a pair of woollen socks for the winter from my mother and a small bag of sweets bearing the name of a familiar shop in Svendborg.

Then came the time when it was Stuckenberg and other friends who made my birthday festive for me. It was on my birthday in 1887 that Viggo, Ingeborg and I went on our unforgettable picnic to Grib Lake. Then it was my wife, who during the first years of our marriage prepared the feast of the day, putting many sweet-acrid-scented chrysanthemums in my room. As soon as the children were dressed they would come in, one by one, to the chair where I was sitting to receive them, and give me their good wishes, their presents and a kiss from their dear little lips . . . .

All these memories were calling me, and in the long run I could not resist them. And yet it was so beautiful in the valley of the Danube, during this clear and sunny, mild October. I take out a few leaves from my diary:

III

"Oct. 4. Gorheim near Sigmaringen. 7 a.m. In the mountain woods behind the monastery. I go up to the bench under the lime tree. Up here the sun is already warm on the ash trees, on the half-withered grass and on the rock boulders. Birds are chirping round about me and shining webs of gossamer quiver restlessly along the ground. Down over the valley lies a huge, shining white cloud; the monastery and the firs are darkly etched against it. The round domes of an avenue of chestnut trees disappear into the sea of fog. Carts rumble along below, quietly, incessantly. Cocks are crowing. A smell of wood-smoke ascends towards me, over in Laiz a bell is ringing.

"For a while I sit quite still and let myself bake in the sun. In Sigmaringen, which I cannot see for the fog, a clock is striking seven and three quarters. Gradually the cloud rises, the fog disperses, the chestnut avenue becomes visible further and further out in the valley. The sun is getting warmer, the twittering of the birds grows more lively. To-day is the feast of Saint Francis. My God, Thy goodness is great in having led me hither to this day.

"Oct. 7. Towards noon I sit on the bench under the lime tree. It is warm and sunny, round about me is the light of the golden-yellow, red and pale yellow foliage and the red and yellow berries of a honeysuckle bush. The large withered leaves flap softly in the wind, a bird flutters amongst the bushes, a withered leaf falls straight to the ground. I look down over the mountain and its light, airy woods of ash and larch. Then fall into contemplation over a branch of oak, on which the stiff, yellow-green leaves are still sitting—on each of them a bud, the result of the summer's work. And the awful wonder of life, all its unsolved riddles, crush me to the

ground. With dread I feel how short life is, that I, who am to-day warming myself in the sun, in a short while, in a couple of years or twenty at the most, shall no more warm myself in the sunshine of the earth but shall be—where? Ah, God, where?

"Oct. 9. Sun, blue sky, golden foliage, a light breeze, soft, continual fall of leaves. 'Lord, am I not most miserable, when the souls created in Thy image must perish because of my fault, because of me? Lord, why dost Thou permit that I, who ought to be an instrument for the salvation of my sister, become instead an instrument for her damnation, because I am the occasion of her faults?' (Raymond of Capua: The Life of Saint Catherine of Siena. II, Cap. 3). 'In His infinite goodness God has given us the light of reason, by which man recognises that virtue and the service of God give him the life of the soul, while sin, love of self, pride, concupiscence, desire of this world, an unrighteous life without the fear of God and without zeal for the glory of God cause the death of the soul and make man worthy of everlasting damnation.' (Catherine of Siena: *Lettera* 206.)[1]

"(Later). On the clear, sun-filled, pure, blue harvest day I read Sheehan's wonderful book, *Luke Delmege*. 'Reverence,' says the Irish priest, 'is the secret of all religion and of all happiness. Without reverence there is no faith, no hope, no charity. Reverence is the foundation of the Ten Commandments: Reverence for God, reverence for one's neighbour, reverence for oneself. Reverence causes humility, nourishes piety, protects purity; reverence for God and all that is His, His servants, His temple, His service—that is religion. Reverence for one's neighbour, for his person, his property, his rights—that is honesty. Reverence for ourselves, that we keep

[1]After having completed my *Saint Francis of Assisi* I began, while still at Beuron, the preliminary studies for a book on Saint Catherine of Siena. It was only completed ten years later.

soul and body holy—that is chastity. Satan is Satan because he does not know reverence. The unbeliever is always irreverent and a scoffer.' In a great vision Sheehan finally shows what the Catholic Church is (and what she is not): 'Then to Luke Delmege's wondering gaze the old priest opened the treasury of his holy experience and of the science which is not that of the learned but of the simple, the knowledge of a child and an angel, the wisdom of Bethlehem and Golgotha. He showed how the mighty realm of the Blood of Jesus does indeed penetrate and saturate the whole world, but only stands out clearly where its laws and rules are perfectly kept, while its borders are blurred and displaced where the principles of the Church have entered upon a compromise with the world. Luke Delmege learned that the fundamental law in this realm is this: Lose thyself to find all.' "

I close the book and sit a long while with it before me. Lord, Thou who didst create the pure stars, have mercy upon my impure heart! My God, I am not worthy that Thou shouldst have mercy upon me, nevertheless do Thou have mercy upon me, *in spite of everything*, because Thou art God, because Thou hast created me, because Thou hast said that Thou art a father. Raise my heart up to Thee, lift it, make it glow in Thy fire that Thy promises may be fulfilled in me also. Give me a pure heart, a heart which seeks only Thee, which has only one wish: to do Thy will! *Cor mundum, cor mundum, cor mundum!*

"Oct. 10. Offer up the Mass for the intention that *justice may be done—that sentence may be passed upon me—that I may be punished for all my guilt.*

"Take leave of Gorheim. Sit once more for the last time under the lime tree which is now almost leafless. It is dull and foggy and there is a chilly breeze. The falling leaves rustle to the ground, crows are screaming, titmice are hopping from branch to branch and cheeping

plaintively. And I look ahead to the winter, like the poor, perplexed titmice.

"Oct. 11. Beuron. After High Mass walk out to St. Maurus im Felde. The fog rises and is followed by a radiantly bright day. The forest-clad mountain sides shine like piles of gold and copper, veined by green ore. A light sun-smoke throws a thin veil over them. The forest through which I walk is like a hall of gold and it is perfectly still. Only a faint rustling of falling leaves and the quiet flowing of the Danube deep down. The fragrance of the withered leaves is wonderfully strong and sweet. I feel everything evil fading away, everything hard in my soul melting; I grow gentle and warm as a little child. God be praised for everything he has bestowed upon me in Beuron! Here I have never *done* anything wrong, have never *suffered* anything wrong.

"Oct. 13. 'Love produces likeness between him who loves and the object of his love. If, therefore, I love a creature, I become like that creature, nay, I even become of less worth than it, because love not only makes the two alike, but also subjects him who loves to the object of his love.' (St. John of the Cross). I read these words of the great Spanish mystic and all at once it becomes clear to me that love of this kind—whether it be a man's love for his wife, a mother's for an idolised son, a woman's for a lover—is really *idolatry*. He who loves in this way does not make the will of God his supreme law, but the will of his beloved. If the loved one so will, he will transgress the commandments of God. He is dishonest in money matters, he promises, well knowing that he cannot keep his promise; he wrongs, injures and offends others merely for the sake of not hearing a harsh word from the lips of the beloved or seeing a discontented wrinkle on her brow. He who loves in this way does not find his greatest happiness in pleasing God and obeying the dictates of his conscience—his reward is a smile, a caress, a kiss, an embrace—and his punishment

is that he must keep on continually on the path of unrighteousness, and that the loved one despises him more and more, making use of him because he allows himself to be used, but looking down upon him as upon the dog which fawns upon its master who can safely give it a kick—it will always come back fawning and pleading, and happy in being restored to favour.

"Oct. 14. In the grey, dark evening a walk amongst huge, grey rocks covered with patches of moss and fern, to the valley by the Lourdes grotto. A halt in the chapel in front of the grotto—it is quiet, quiet, quiet—only the fall of a raindrop, the stirring of an animal, the hurried tripping of a blackbird over the withered leaves. On the wall of rough, unhewn pine trunks at the back of the chapel hangs a large crucifix painted in crude colours, and round its foot small scraps of paper are fastened to it with pins, they bear the petitions of pious wayfarers who have written down the desire of their hearts and left them here at the foot of the Cross. I read these small scraps of paper, most of them torn out of a pocket-book and written in pencil. On one of them are the words: 'A great sinner asks compassionate people to help her with their prayers'; on another; 'A daughter prays for a good death for her unbelieving father. My God, do not forsake him!' On a third: 'A hardened sinner asks for an Our Father for herself.'"

"'A great sinner,' 'a hardened sinner' passed by here one day . . . . ah, doubtless not any elegant or powdered and perfumed lady from Stuttgart or Ulm or Sigmaringen —more probably a poor peasant woman, a plain and rough peasant girl up from the mountains, from Schwäbisch' Alb or from Schwarzwald . . . . Perhaps she is not at all the 'great,' the 'hardened' sinner she thinks she is, but she feels so herself and then there is nothing else to be done—conscience rages in her soul like a lion seeking what it may devour. And so she has walked the long way to Beuron and before Our Lady of Lourdes in

the lonely valley she has prayed for strength to make a really good confession to one of the pious Benedictines in the monastery—strength to surrender herself altogether to the will of God, strength to break the hard love of self and the soft love of the world which still holds her captive . . . .

" 'Jesus, lieber Heiland mein, hilf uns, dass wir werden dein, denn nicht Unkraut sondern Blumen möchten wir so gern sein,' I read on the newest of the little pieces of paper—it is a nice sheet of note-paper and it is fastened under a beautiful bunch of flowers, not yet withered; the petition is signed by 'Three young girls from Heiligenbronn' (Heiligenbronn—in Schwarzwald—Verkade and I were there on an excursion from Aichalden!).

"The dusk becomes night, the fog becomes rain, I walk slowly home to my cell. Yes—'not weeds, but flowers are what we want so much to be!'

"Oct. 18. In the library I open an old English book, *Sancta Sophia*,[1] by the Benedictine, Augustine Baker, published in Douai in 1657. In it I find the following prayer:

" 'For love of Thee, oh God, I resolve to walk in the ways that Thou wilt lead me, even if I am not able to understand these Thy ways or to see how any good can come out of them . . . . I will be content, even when all grow tired and weary of me—I resolve that I will take upon myself all unpleasant labours, debasing and fatiguing for my proud and indolent nature, which love of my neighbour or Thy will might require of me . . . I surrender myself to bear all kinds of injustice, mockery and contempt and at the same time to submit to being regarded as impatient and malicious.'

"Oct. 19. 7.30 morning. It is raining softly in large,

[1] Augustine Baker's wonderfully penetrating, keen-sighted and effective book was published after his death by his brother in religion, Serenus Cressy. (Douai, 1657.) A new edition has been carried out by Abbot Norbert Sweeney (London, 1905)—the passages quoted above are to be found on pp. 639-640.

scattered drops upon the leaves of the plum tree outside my window. The sky is grey and lowering, but on the other side of the valley the mountain, with its russet woods and grey limestone cliffs, rises out of the shadow up to a mild sunshine resting upon the whole mountain ridge. The sky is an even grey blue; on the heavy background of cloud a clearly defined rainbow stands motionless a long while.

" 'At the end God will separate fire from light. He will send all the fire to the realm of the damned, all the light to the regions of the blest,' says Jacobus a Voragine, with the brevity and clearness of genius. My God, grant that I may be light and not flame!

"Oct. 22. 1.30. On the way to St. Maurus im Felde. It has grown very warm, the rocks along the roadside throw back heat. Penetrated altogether by light and heat the forest stands quietly trembling.

"9.0 evening. Look out across the valley. The sky is clear and starlit—above the mountain on the other side a big star keeps on trembling. 'A star trembled near the border line of heaven, wearied of watching, tired of sleeping, and the moonlight spread out vast and blue, watch over budding forests keeping.' Ah, Viggo—what did our youth become? Our love of art was not enough to save it.

"Oct. 23. 6 a.m. In the whitish-blue morning mist the dark-grey line of the mountains and in the milky, bluish-white air two big, silver-white stars.

"Sunshine, joy in work. But I shall not be able to finish my *Dänische Literaturgeschichte* (which I had begun in September at Aichalden) while I am here. Up to the present I have only reached the year 1800.

"9.30 evening. The half-moon sets behind the mountain—it looks as if a white flame was burning up there. Someone is calling loudly far away—keeps on calling so that all the silent valleys ring with it.

"Oct. 28. 10.45 evening. Have written the last letters

and packed my trunk, to-morrow I leave. I look out of the window, the moon stands white and clear high up in the light-blue sky—a few stars—a few white clouds. The mountains in a greyish haze. A faint vapour rises from the valley. It is quiet, quiet, quiet.

"Last night in Beuron. *When* and *how* shall I come here again?

"Oct. 29. Cool sunshine. The last preparations for the journey. It is Sunday, the 21st Sunday after Pentecost—Mass is said in green vestments, as on the Sunday when I first came here in 1894. I take note of the following words in the liturgy for the day, to take with me on the way, out into the world:

"*Introit:* All things are in thy will, O Lord; and there is none that can resist Thy will. *Lesson:* (Eph. 6) For our wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, against the rulers of the world of this darkness, against the spirits of wickedness in the high places. *Gradual* (Ps. 113). When Israel went out of Egypt, the house of Jacob from a barbarous people. *Gospel* (Matt. 18): So also shall my heavenly Father do to you, if you forgive not every one his brother from your hearts. *Communion* (Ps. 118). In thy word have I hoped: when wilt thou execute judgment? The wicked have persecuted me: help me, O Lord my God."

IV

After living for four months in out-of-the-way valleys and quiet monasteries, it was strange to arrive in Munich and again to be in the rush of modern noisy and radiant life. I felt lonely and homeless and only wished to get away as quickly as possible. I delivered to Karl Muth the manuscript of the completed half of my *Dänische Literaturgeschichte* and received an advance payment for the German edition of my *Saint Francis of Assisi*. I went to the *Sezessions Ausstellung* and wrote a

series of articles on it to *Nationaltidende*—And scribbled down for my own use a sketch here and there of the life around me in the hotel, which had all the interest of novelty after my long absence from the life of culture.

"Oct. 31. 7.30-8. The coffee-room of the hotel. Outside the large windows, the bright square and the grey railway station in the background. The air is not dark, drearily grey as in Berlin, but light grey, the blue sky breaking through the clouds. Sunshine on the faces of all the schoolchildren passing by close to the windows and peeping in. Two great loads of trunks. A Turk in a red fez. A messenger wearing a red cap comes up to the hotel at a jog trot. The big red trams rumble past. The large hotel omnibuses leave the station—*Vier Jahreszeiten*; *Englischer Hof*; cabs follow them. Many people in Loden-cloaks and green Tyrolese hats pass by.

"A continual stream of people into the café: 'Morgen!'—'Morgen!' The '*Adieu*, *guten Morgen*' of the head waiter is *not* answered by the really distinguished guests. Round about the room gentlemen reading newspapers, gentlemen seeking loose change in their pockets, gentlemen drinking coffee and making calculations on the corner of a newspaper—an old married couple—a family dressed for going out; Husband, wife, child, mother-in-law, 'one coffee, three teas!' 'no, two coffees, two teas.' The waiters walk incessantly to and fro on the polished floor; the piccolo rattles cups and plates when gathering them together; from the hatch out to the kitchen there is a loud and continual rattling of china."

From Munich to Berlin and from Berlin via Warnemünde—Gedser—to Copenhagen—the accustomed road from the south northwards. At half-past three on the morning of my birthday I stood on the upper deck of the ferry in clear, calm weather. Moonlight, and in the distance the first Danish lighthouse—a flashlight—it looks as if it sprang up over the horizon and again dipped

down behind it. At half-past five we landed from the lower deck; it looked as if the gangway led straight up into bright, sparkling Orion.

During the next two years and a half I did not leave Denmark. The prayer which I had offered up one day in October in the little Franciscan church at Gorheim was fulfilled. *Justice was done—sentence was passed upon me—I suffered my punishment.* For thirty months yet I was almost daily without respite day and night in God's quern.

For God's quern grinds slowly, slowly—year in, year out—two years, five years, ten years, fifteen years, it has not yet ground long enough.

But if he who is being ground in the quern is a poet, it will happen now and then that a few verses will trickle out between the mill-stones, like blood:

The evening is so still and clear
and above the leafless trees
a star I see—ah, I know it well,
I know its blue and silver gleam.

My star it is—when I was seventeen
it first drew my glance, it drew my soul,
so trembling was it—so remote,
and quivering, like my own heart in fear.

Ah, distant star, distant evening hour,
where are they now, those years of mine?
I have grown grey, embittered are my lips
and in my heart is wound on wound.

I was so young—alas, I was not good.
I dreamed and dreamed of nought but earthly joys;
the jack-o'lantern was my chosen guide,
the elfin maiden drew me to her breast.

The distant star—how far off and how bright—
but in my soul another fire glowed.
I was my mother's errant son
and in the land of elves I lost my way.

My joy in life I slew, and slew another's joy . .
an outlaw am I now from year to year,
seeking my rest beside a stranger's hearth
for a brief hour, then wander on and on.

For love is ardent fire from God—
an ever burning, an undying fire—
Put off your shoes, all ye who pass me by,
for in Jehovah's fire do I burn.

THE CROSS

Es giebt kein Minner, ausser er sei ein Märtyrer.
HEINRICH SEUSE.

I

WHEN I went to Frauenberg at Fulda in July, 1906, to finish my book on Saint Francis of Assisi, I made the journey by way of the Rhine in order to pay a visit in the small town of Pfaffendorf near Coblenz. This was because in February or March of that year I had received a letter bearing the postmark of this little town, and addressed in a handwriting unknown to me. I opened the letter—it was written in a firm, clear hand and signed Paula Reinhard. The purport of it was that the writer, daughter of a deceased Judge Reinhard of Ehrenbreitstein, had read with interest and pleasure the German translation of my *Pilgrim Book* and now invited me to pay a visit if on my travels my road took me past "Villa Emmaus," in Pfaffendorf, where she and an older sister of fragile health had lived since their father's death. Some picture post cards enclosed with the letter showed me, partly the villa itself, partly the convent adjoining it (for "The Sisters of the Perpetual Adoration" was printed underneath the picture), finally the view from "Villa Emmaus" over the Rhine, Ehrenbreitstein and Coblenz.

One day in July 1906, then, I availed myself of this invitation. The diary says: "Left Cologne on a morning of heat haze. We pass Bonn, reach the banks of the Rhine. The vines are half-grown and green. I recog-

nise Rolandseck, see a glimpse of Nonnenwerth, send a greeting over to Drachenfels. At Coblenz I leave the train. Fine Romanesque churches. In the dull, hazy day by tram on a bridge across the yellow Rhine. Then Pfaffendorf—the tram stops in front of the Catholic church, at which I have been told to get out. In the quiet, dull day I walk up Wendelinsstrasse. On one side there are small houses, on the other a brown vineyard wall, now and then broken by small, narrow stairways up to decayed gates and porches. Ivy, acacia and other plants hang in close profusion over the wall, which finally merges into a real rock-wall. I see Pfaffendorf below me and at the end of the street a large block of buildings surmounted by a spire." (July 9.)

Then for the first time I set foot in "Villa Emmaus." For the first time I opened the massive gate between the stone pillars and walked into the large, quiet garden sloping with grass lawns and flaming geranium beds down to the villa and the convent attached to it, and surrounded by the same wall. For the first time I entered the large, shady rooms and slipped with unaccustomed feet on the polished floors, the smooth oak stairs. The courteous servant, gardener and factotum, Franz, showed me into a room with a balcony from which I looked down over the silver-grey roofs of Pfaffendorf and the slate-grey church spire, the flowing Rhine and Coblenz in a grey heat-haze on the other side. Along the banks of the Rhine the trains were running to and fro—from within the convent I could hear the nuns singing. And Fräulein Paula, who was small, middle-aged and dressed in black, led me through the long passage between the villa and the convent over to the family chapel, where a big window stood open into the convent church. On the way Fräulein Paula showed me the library—four walls quite covered from floor to ceiling with book-cases and book-shelves—the caskets with relics standing on small tables and on

brackets with flowers and burning candles in the long corridor that we passed through, at the entrance to the chapel she handed me holy water and made a double genuflexion—for, in the church, high up in a niche in the middle of the shining white, Romanesque, marble altar, stood, between candles and flowers in a brilliant, jewelled monstrance, the Blessed Sacrament.

At lunch I was introduced to Fräulein Maria—a tall, quiet figure, with features stamped by a look of suffering, dressed all in black like her younger, robust and talkative sister. It was the latter who conducted the conversation at the table. From Francis of Assisi the talk fell naturally on other saints, in particular on those of modern times, who like him, had borne the stigmata of Christ's wounds, and I then told them of my interest in Anna Katharina Emmerich and of my pilgrimage to Dülmen in 1904. I described as well as I could my visit to the Emmerich house, and how I had there perceived what the Westphalian peasant girl must have been to Clemens Brentano, and the part she must have played in the life of the Romantic poet. I spoke of the impression made upon me by the bare little room of the stigmatised nun, that narrow, cramped room with bluish, white-washed walls and light only from a single window overlooking a garden. I spoke of how, amongst the coarse and scanty furniture of this room and the naïve devotional pictures on the walls, I had felt overwhelmed by the whole atmosphere of unworldliness of Christianity, of its super-worldliness, its counter-worldliness. I told them how I had gone to Koësfeld and had walked on the *Via Crucis* on which Anna Katharina had so often walked as a young girl—the two hours' Way of the Cross in the pinewood. I told them how, following in the footsteps of Brentano, I had also gone to Flamske and had seen the stable in which (as the poet writes) "that delicate, pure, light-filled and spiritually richly gifted being was born and brought up." Like Brentano

I had felt there the deep, painful contrast between a life like that of Anna Katharina, which rests entirely upon deep, unshakable faith and therefore walks on the straight road from the Crib to the Cross, and the views of life of a modern Romantic, riddled as they are by doubts, and his mode of life, enfeebled by many kinds of indulgence.

When I ceased speaking Paula Reinhard looked at her sister (the two maidservants had just gone out to fetch the next course) and then said: "In our times stigmatised persons are still to be found. Living not very far from here, in Belgian Limburg, there is a woman who not only bears the marks of the wounds of Christ on her body, but who suffers the whole of the Saviour's Passion every Friday. I have been there myself and seen it."

The maids came in again and the talk turned to other matters. After lunch I saw the whole of the large, well-ordered house, the garden and the upper garden on the other side of the street—extensive grounds with fruit trees, vegetables, a pergola of vine-foliage, summer-houses, artificial grottoes. Nothing more was said at supper about the stigmatised girl—but Fräulein Paula told me about another remarkable modern woman, the Tyrolese Maria Agnes Clara Steiner, who was born in 1813 in Taisten (Pusterthal) and died in 1862 as abbess of the convent of Poor Clares in Nocera (Umbria).

When I had retired for the night, I gathered the chief impressions of the day together in these lines: "I feel that I am at a crucial point from which the issue for me may be life or death. My God, how ashamed I am of my weak, soft, self-sick nature. Grant me at last to become different." Again, at a glance in the mirror, I was seized with the old loathing of myself: "A feeling, in the midst of all this order and purity, of my own vileness and unworthiness. The mirrors of good people always say to me: 'You are a deceiver!' My God, grant

me at last an honest face! Lord, I cannot endure myself any longer—deliver me, save me!"

Thinking these thoughts I sat up a long while in the night—sat on the balcony and looked out. The grey Rhine, the haze-grey mountains, the grey sky. Lights in Coblenz and scattered along the banks. Down in Pfaffendorf a troop of young people walk along the streets to music and with torch-lights. I am nervous, troubled, hot. Have written some "Wayside Notes" for *Nationaltidende*, not very good. Feel more homeless and unattached than ever. It is as though there were *something*, a barrier, a wall between these two women and myself. *Reinhard*, "the pure heart!" And *I* feel so impure.

From Frauenberg I sent a card to "Villa Emmaus" with these lines—it was in the summer that I wrote German verse:

Immer zieh' ich durch die Länder,
bald im Süden, bald im Norden,
und wohin ich auch mich wende
ist mir Ruhe nie geworden.

Ruhe nicht—wohl aber Frieden,
denn ich bin in Gottes Händen.
Wenn er will, Er kann befehlen,
das die Pilgerzeit soll enden.

The two charitable ladies later gave proof of their interest in me in various ways, among them being that of rescuing me again and again from the economic distress into which I plunged time after time. At the new year of 1908 I received a letter in which Paula Reinhard declared, "We are always ready to help you."

When Paula wrote this she was already suffering from the disease that was to cause her death (cancer of the throat). In the course of a very short time the disease made terrible progress; the physicians were powerless, an operation was impossible; a pilgrimage to Lourdes,

undertaken by Paula with heroic courage, obtained no result. She returned from France on June 14th and died four days after, on Thursday, June 18th, the feast of Corpus Christi, enduring with great fortitude the agony of a death by suffocation.

During that trying year, 1908, I sympathised as well as I could with the trials of the two sisters, with the grief of the elder sister in her bereavement. I had received the deeply moving account of the last moments of the departed one, of her unshakable faith, her never failing patience and the deep, sisterly affection with which she had gathered up her last strength to force out the last words to the weeping Maria: "You must—not—take—so hardly—It is—*not so bad*—." I answered and sent my thanks and scribbled the few poor words I could get time to put together in the midst of my continual anxieties about money. Nothing could have surprised me more, however, than to receive a letter on March 8th, 1909, from Fräulein Maria Reinhard, in which she asked me whether I would be willing to write a biography of her sister.

I spoke to Mogens Ballin, who immediately advised me to consent. I pointed out to my wife the economic advantages of this work (4,000 marks from Fräulein Reinhard besides the payments on the book, in Germany and elsewhere). And then I left home. At the station Mogens Ballin gave me a copy of Madame de Flavigny's book about Saint Catherine of Siena: on the title-page he had written the words of the Psalmist: Salvum me fac Deus, quoniam intraverunt aquae usque ad animam meam ("Save me, O God: for the waters are come in even unto my soul." Ps. 68). As the train glided away from Copenhagen and out into the open country the Psalmist's words pierced me like a sword: "Save me, O God: for the waters are come in even unto my soul. I stick fast in the mire of the deep: and there is no sure standing. O God, thou knowest my foolishness; and

my offences are not hidden from thee: Let them not be ashamed for me, who look for thee, O Lord, the Lord of hosts. Let them not be confounded on my account, who seek thee, O God of Israel. Because for thy sake I have borne reproach: shame hath covered my face. I am become a stranger to my brethren, and an alien to the sons of my mother . . . . the reproaches of them that reproached thee are fallen upon me. They that sit in the gate spoke against me: and they that drank wine made me their song: But as for me, my prayer is to thee, O Lord—draw me out of the mire, that I may not stick fast: deliver me from them that hate me, and out of the deep waters. Thou knowest my reproach, and my confusion, and my shame. My heart hath expected reproach and misery; I looked for one that would grieve together with me, but there was none: and for one that would comfort me, and I found none. But I am poor and sorrowful, O God, let thy salvation set me up.

II

Once more then I was on the way abroad—once more on the Gedser ferry and the D train to Hamburg and Cologne. In the night I stood on the upper deck of the ferry beneath the vast, starry sky. A cold wind was blowing over the wide, dark water; astern, underneath the W of Cassiopeia were the lights of Gedser, further to the east there was a powerful lighthouse lamp which made me think of the Skaw—of last summer there—of the cool August evenings when the children sat round me out in a little dell amongst the sand dunes and I told them stories which I had made up myself. In the north-west flashed another light, it was in the direction of Svendborg! I was alone on the deck, the thick, heavy smoke streamed away over the water, by the light of the deck-house I saw the three men at the wheel and it reminded me that to-morrow was the 17th April, my

father's birthday. How many nights had he not stood in loneliness on a ship's bridge and looked from the ever restless dial of the compass up to the unswerving stars—How little I really knew about him . . . I saw him before me, the small, brown and thin man who was eighty years old on his last birthday, but who still ran up the steep streets in Svendborg as actively as a boy . . . How small a part he had played in my life—he who was always away on long voyages and only came home now and then, when he would cover the little table my eldest sister and I had for our toys with humming birds whose breast feathers shone like gold, glowed like fire, flamed blue like sulphur—with humming birds and green, bronze bordered beetles and rare conch shells and coins from foreign countries, copper ones, most of them, but some were of silver . . . . That was my father, and that was really all I knew about him. I left home and walked in paths that were far from his . . . Like all the old seamen in Svendborg, he belonged to the Right (Conservative Party) in politics; what those on the Left wanted was, in his opinion, only that "the peasants should rule over us." A number of *Politiken* which I had brought home and which he had read, sent him into a rage. . . . . But that summer when everything seemed to fall into ruins for me, that summer of the great settling up, when all my conservative benefactors withdrew their support, it was then, on the last day, that he came down to me in the garden where I was lying on the grass, thinking things over . . . He did not say anything, but stopped a few steps away from me under the young plum tree which he had planted himself, and which bore fruit that year for the first time . . . He searched amongst the leaves for the best and largest plums, felt them, to find out whether they were ripe, and then, as though anxious or shy, threw one along to me in the grass: "Here you are, Johannes." I took it and he threw another—and another—and another. Then, when he could not find

any more ripe ones, he turned round and walked slowly up the garden path.

On that day I felt that I had a father. A quarter of a century had passed away since then, and only the last years had brought us nearer to each other. He felt a quiet pride now when there was something about me in the local paper; then he would come in from the sitting-room where he had sat reading at the window overlooking the street, his spectacles pushed up on his forehead and his white hair slightly fluffed, and go out to the kitchen or down to the garden to my sisters, to tell them: "Johannes is in the paper to-night!" When I came over to Svendborg on the visits that were, alas, far too short, he liked to be in the same room with me, and if I went into another room he would follow me. At the supper table we would discuss, with more or less interest on his part, home and foreign politics and it was his joy to offer me a tot of "aquivitæ" in one of the small liqueur glasses, the only ones of the kind we ever had in the house. During my mother's last illness he was mostly in the room next to the bedroom; on the morning of my mother's death I went with him to our old neighbour, the joiner, to order the coffin. He was in his workshop—we went over to him. When my father went in the old joiner looked up from his plane with a questioning glance. My father nodded silently and then the two old men talked of the length of the coffin.

So little—or so much—did I know about my father, about him whose son I was. Of my father as a husband I knew absolutely nothing. Had he been happy? Had he made my mother happy? Often, in the midst of the sufferings of my own marriage it seemed to me that I was suffering not only on my own account, but that I was atoning for another—paying off a debt I had inherited .... Was I right? Or had my father's and mother's marriage been a happy one? Were there indeed any happy marriages at all?

"There are happy marriages," said Fräulein Reinhard (with whom I had immediately begun the work on her sister's biography the day after my arrival in Pfaffendorf), "and the proof is *here*." She laid her hand upon a packet of letters—the letters which her father and mother had written to each other in their youth. "In order to understand a fruit one must know the tree which has borne the fruit," she added. "I will therefore ask you, Mr. Jörgensen, to make yourself acquainted with this correspondence."

I had been given a room which had been Paula's, a large, bright room with a wide bay window to the east, looking out upon the garden and the street. Fräulein Reinhard herself took me to my new room and showed me how everything had been arranged during her sister's illness. Here she sat at the wide-open window, propped up by pillows so as to be able to breathe, and suffered a death terrible as but few . . . . Her breathing was at last such an effort that it sounded like the sawing of wood, and the sawing could be heard all over the house. . . . . Yet never was there a complaint, never a sign of impatience, of rebellion. . . . On the way home from Lourdes, in dreadful heat, travelling day and night, she who was ill was the only one who never complained. . . "You might at least *say* that it's hot!" said my cousin, Frau Mencken, full of wonder. She accompanied my sister to Lourdes and home again. "Yes, it *is* warm," Paula answered gently. And when at last they reached Aix-la-Chapelle and the others were thinking only of quenching their thirst—"I could have emptied the water-supply!" said Frau Mencken—Paula would not drink anything because it was past midnight and she wanted to go to holy communion next morning. She could not sleep, could not rest—she sat all night long in an armchair by the open window and at last, at seven in the morning, she gathered up her last strength and dragged herself to church to receive holy communion . . .

When she learned, before starting on the journey to Lourdes, that she was suffering from sarcoma, and that a cure was impossible, that death by suffocation awaited her, she wrote to her spiritual director, the Bishop of Treves: "I regard this illness as a costly necklace bestowed upon me by my crucified Saviour." "Ah, Mr. Jörgensen, Paula was a heroine—and a saint!"

I was left alone in my room—I went about and looked at the pictures on the walls. Nothing remarkable, nothing particularly artistic—a Madonna by Ittenbach, a Sacred Heart picture by von Oer, Steinle's drawing of the Good Shepherd rescuing the lost sheep from amongst the thorns. In a velvet casing a brown wooden crucifix—embroidered on the velvet the words: *Sterbekreuz unseres seligen Vaters*. And there he was himself, "our blessed father," Judge Franz Reinhard—a broad-shouldered, robust Westphalian with good grey eyes, a wart at the root of the nose, a mouth midway between kindness and firmness. I stand a long while before his picture—it seems to me that the grey eyes grow so questioning and so stern. "Who are you? What do you, a stranger, want in my house?"

Then I turn to my work, in an old family chronicle and in the letters handed to me I begin to study the history of Franz Reinhard's love and marriage.

III

Now comes the time when France enters into my life—not only through books but as a reality. In order that I might better be able to write the close of her sister's life Fräulein Reinhard wished me to go to Lourdes. Hitherto the goal of my journeys had always been Germany or Italy, the two countries for which a northerner involuntarily longs. Since my conversion the predilection for them had but grown stronger. For me France chiefly meant Paris, and Paris was to my mind chiefly atheism,

libertinage, *Moulin rouge* and *Chat noir*. I had nothing to do in France and felt no desire whatever of going there.

Yet the last few years had brought me more than one French friendship. As early as 1898, a young French priest, Pierre d'Armailhacq, had published "The Truth and Falsehood of Life," in French, under the title of *Le Néant de la Vie*, borrowed from Ernest Hello, and had provided the little book with a biographical introduction. In 1901, while on a visit to the Jesuits in Aarhus, I had made the acquaintance of another young ecclesiastic from Paris, Abbé Pierre Rivière, who used, during those years, to visit the Scandinavian countries almost every summer, and who had a particular fondness for Denmark. In 1904 Téodor de Wyzewa wrote his essay about me in the *Revue des deux Mondes* and translated, first *The Pilgrim Book* (under the title *Pélérinages franciscains*), then *Saint Francis of Assisi*, finally The Story of the Journey (*Le Livre de la Route*).

Nevertheless I should scarcely have gone to France so early as 1909 if I had not been *sent* there. Altogether (I must be allowed to add this) I can say the same of all my journeys—during the course of time there were not a few of them—that I have undertaken none without being *sent*. Sent or *called*—or (as a third motive reason) *compelled*. There are therefore towns which I have never seen, countries and districts which I do not know at all and which—to the astonishment of the professional globe-trotter—I declare openly that I would not spend two shillings to become acquainted with—such as Athens, Constantinople, the Bernese Oberland. It would be another matter if I were *sent* or *called* thither, for then assuredly none would be more enthusiastic than I over the Parthenon, the Bosphorus or Finsteraarhorn.

I was sent to France, then, and in particular to Lourdes. Fräulein Reinhard desired very much that I should be there on June 18th, the anniversary of Paula's death, and in the spite of the shortness of time and of many

hindrances I arrived the day before. I have described this visit in my book about Lourdes.[1] Elsewhere I have described the visit I paid while in Lourdes to the neighbouring Orthez, to the recent convert, Francis Jammes, whose collection of poems, *L'Eglise habillée de feuilles*, had in Denmark been the great joy of Mogens Ballin and myself.

On the way home from Lourdes I made a short stop at Avignon, for purposes of study in connection with Saint Catherine of Siena, and decided also to spend some days in Paris. On the outward journey to Lourdes I had gone by a more southerly route; it was therefore my first visit to the French capital. I arrived at noon on June 26th and at the station on the Quai d'Orsay I was met by Pierre Rivière, who took me to his comfortable, book-filled and well-arranged flat in the *rue de l'Université*. I had written to him that there were only three things I wanted to see in Paris: Notre Dame—Sacré Cœur—and the grave of Paul Verlaine. In the afternoon he took me to Notre Dame; for the first time I strolled under the plane trees along the quays of the Seine, past the book-barrows of the *bouquinistes*, for the first time I saw the two great roses in Notre Dame and the flaming windows in the chancel, "a forest of colours on fire." Then we went by the newly-opened *Métro* to the Tuileries Gardens—and who should meet us there, amongst the statues and the playing children, but Pierre d'Armailhacq. The two priests exchanged friendly greetings, and Rivière surrendered me to d'Armailhacq's protection. We drove about Paris in one of the automobiles then newly-invented—I looked in bewilderment at the dangerous afternoon traffic around us in the Avenue de l'Opéra (*C'est l'heure propice pour être écrasé*, said d'Armailhacq, smiling), and in the evening I was able to record in my diary that I had seen the

[1]Published in an English translation in 1914 by Messrs Longmans Green.

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two great boulevards, the church of the Madeleine, Place de la Concorde, the Chamber of Deputies and the Boulevard Saint Germain.

I had supper alone, in a tavern frequented by cabmen, but where an excellent *noix de veau* was served, and where I was glad to break the white bread and drink the red wine of France for the first time. Afterwards I went by way of the rue Bonaparte down to the quays—the quays I knew so well from Zola's *l'Œuvre*, from the diaries of the de Goncourts, from Huysman's novels. Under a grey sky I stood on the Pont Neuf—below me flowed the Seine in the dusk, full of great barges, with landing-stages bearing posters with all sorts of rubbish, untidiness and useful hideousness. He was right, Des Esseintes —he was right, Durtal, when he hurled his æsthetic curse against the modern town and modern culture! Yet I felt that here another standard was required—that Paris could not be judged as one judges Firenze or Rome—that the Louvre, the Vendôme Column, the Arc de Triomphe are not works of art like others, not works of art before everything else, but that they are history which has become embodied in stone and sculpture. . . .

The next day was a Sunday and I went to Mass in Saint Sulpice. There was a sermon during Mass, a short *prône* on (as I wrote) "the essential theme": the insufficiency of all merely human things.

After Mass I was invited to lunch with Pierre Rivière's parents and heard the interesting news that Adolphe Retté, whose small symbolistic books—*Une belle dame passa* and others—had stood on my shelves in the days of "The Tower," had now become a convert and intended to enter the Benedictine Order. I spent the afternoon in the Luxembourg Museum with my old friends, the Impressionists—"*Le Déjeûner*, by Manet, the table in the shade, the blue cups, the napkin, the hat with the

black ribbons up in the tree, the red flowers in the background and the whole atmosphere of brilliant sunshine; Pizarro's red roofs; Renoir's flowering chestnuts and two little girls playing; Sisley's Canal du Loing."

In the evening I again went to my cabmen's and workmen's tavern and had a meal in quiet contentment, "contemplating everything" (says the diary) "with the eyes of Zola or Huysmans." And later, in the light summer evening stood before the obelisk on the Place de la Concorde and "saw the automobiles come rushing out in swarms from the Arc de Triomphe and swinging past me towards Rue Royale and down towards Rue de Rivoli, incessantly, till it made one giddy." Paris began to exercise her magic over me—"I am already quite grieved that in twenty-four hours I shall no longer see the grey, round towers on Saint Sulpice," I wrote on the last night.

On the day of departure I paid a short visit in the morning to Téodor de Wyzewa in the Rue du Pré-aix-Clercs—sat in a deep armchair in his low-ceiled study, where there were books, objects of art and *bibelots* everywhere and from the window a view to the trees in an old garden—a room like that of one of Huysmans' heroes, Monsieur Folantin or the writer in *En ménage*. Wyzewa talked incessantly, while smoking cigarettes and drinking cold tea just as incessantly. Amongst other things he told me about the vain attempts of Georg Brandes to obtain through him an entrance into the *Revue des deux Mondes*. Then Pierre d'Armailhacq took me to Saint Sévérin and to Saint Julien des Pauvres and to the Benedictine chapel in *Rue Monsieur* which Huysmans has made so well-known. I had read the description of it in *En route* in the winter of 1894-95 in my attic study in Hallingsgade; now I was on the spot! It was in the days of anti-clericalism in France, and with deep indignation my priest friend told me of the injustice that had been committed—the large monastery of the teaching bro-

thers at the corner of Rue Oudinot and the Boulevard des Invalides had been taken for the Colonial Office, the archiepiscopal residence claimed by the Labour Ministry and the large Sacré Cœur convent together with its grounds of five hectares of garden would probably be used as lodgings for foreign sovereigns on their visits. The convent of the Augustinian nuns in the Boulevard Raspail had been razed to the ground; of *l'Abbaye au Bois* in the Rue de Sèvres, where Chateaubriand used to come to visit Madame Récamier, only a small fragment was now left. On part of the vacant ground Marc Sangnier had erected the palace from which he issued *La Démocratie* — "there he is on his balcony, with his mother," said d'Armailhacq, as we passed the head-quarters of "Sillonism" on the Boulevard Raspail. At another place, in a quiet street, my friend took me through a porch into a back-garden with a pavilion in the middle—"Here Coppée spent the close of his life, here he wrote *La bonne souffrance*, here he died . . . "

After this stay of only three days in Paris I already felt at home. For I had not come to strangers, I had come to a country, the intellectual movements of which I had eagerly followed for a quarter of a century now. It was not necessary to explain anything to me—I knew beforehand the Benedictine nuns in the Rue Monsieur, I knew what *le Sillon* was and had read *La bonne souffrance*. I felt that here on the banks of the Seine there was a religious, literary and artistic culture, in the school of which I had been a pupil, and in which I felt free and quite at ease. It was with great regret that I said good-bye to the wise, refined and amiable d'Armailhacq, who shared the last meal with me at the railway station and involuntarily I felt as if I had been moved down to a lower class when next morning, in Luxemburg and in Treves, I had to speak German again.

IV

I had come to Villa Emmaus at the time of the Rhineland spring; all the cherry and plum trees were in full blossom up the mountain sides and the deep, narrow streets of Pfaffendorf and Ehrenbreitstein were filled with their fragrance. I worked through the spring and summer and as harvest time drew near I began to see the end of my task. When I had finished *The Story of a Hidden Life* I could draw up the balance sheet for the past eight months as follows: published in Denmark (1) *From Vesuvius to the Skaw*, (2) Collected Poems: *From the Depths*, (3) Translation of *The Lord of the World*, by R. H. Benson, (4) sent my weekly "Wayside Notes" to *Nationtidende* and (5) written *The Story of a Hidden Life*.

On the day when I wrote the last lines of the manuscript there was not much left of what was due to me of the 4000 marks; during the spring and summer they had quietly sped away to Denmark in sums of 300 and 400 kroner. As a further honorarium, however, Fräulein Reinhard had a surprise in store for me—she offered me a journey to Belgium to visit that stigmatic woman of whom Paula had told me when I first visited Villa Emmaus, and who was still living. Fräulein Reinhard's companion, Fräulein van Gelder, and Frau Maria Mencken, cousin of the former, were to accompany me on the journey.

One morning then we started by train from Ehrenbreitstein and went to Cologne, from Cologne to Aix-la-Chapelle, and thence via Maestricht into Belgium. In the evening we arrived at Hasselt, our temporary destination, and there we were met by the friend and confidant of the stigmatic, Fräulein Helene Hofman of Burgsteinfurt in Westphalia, who was to be our guide. Fräulein Hofman is small, middle-aged and thin, her manner diffident and shy, yet cordial. She takes us to a hotel opposite the station where rooms have been en-

gaged for us, and where we meet other pilgrims, a lawyer named Schultz, a Herr Poetzold and a stout German priest whose name is not mentioned. While we are at supper Fräulein Hofman informs us that we are to go by train to Schuelen, then to walk or drive to Lummen,[1] where the stigmatic lives. The talk naturally turns to Dülmen (even the name, Lummen, reminds one of it) and to the Westphalian stigmatised girl of the previous century, and Fräulein Hofman relates that on one of her frequent visits to Lummen she had brought with her a relic of Anna Katharina Emmerich which she laid on the forehead of the Belgian stigmatic during her ecstasy. "Rosalie was lying with closed eyes, far away in spirit. But hardly had she felt the relic before a smile passed over her face and she exclaimed: 'Oh, Sister Katharina, what great glory has not God given you in heaven!' "

"What language do you speak to the stigmatic?" I asked.

"Rosalie only speaks Flemish," answered Fräulein Hofman, "and I have taught myself Flemish to be able to understand her. It is not difficult for a Westphalian."

"Flemish is nothing but a kind of low German," said the German priest with an air of finality, and we retired for the night, taking up our candles as we went up the stairs. Next morning, then, we were bound for the supernatural.

I thought about it when I was alone in my room, trying to put together the fragments that Fräulein Hofman had related into a picture of the stigmatised woman. She was an ordinary peasant girl, her name was Rosalie Put, a quite common Flemish name . . . . She was the third or fourth child in a large family and was now near the end of the thirties . . . . For several years she had, like Saint Francis of Assisi, borne the marks of Christ's wounds; like Anna Katharina Emmerich,

[1]The u is pronounced like the German ü.

she also bears the marks of the Crown of Thorns . . . . Every Friday she lives through the whole history of the Passion—in an ecstatic state walks on the Way of the Cross—falls three times on the way to Golgotha—finally experiences the agonies of the Crucifixion . . . . It lasts from early in the morning till one o'clock in the afternoon. When the Crucifixion is consummated and she lies outstretched in agonised ecstasy she sees hidden things: her vision is not hindered by the boundaries of space and she gazes into the future.

The future—that fruit of the present—what form is it going to take for me? Three years ago when I sent the two little verses from Frauenberg near Fulda to Villa Emmaus I had expressed in them the hope that my time of pilgrimage might be over; I had dreamed of living amongst my children. Was there any prospect of it? I thought of my journey home in 1906, of all that had happened since then. And here I was in a small hotel room in Hasselt, with no other company than the candle on the bare table.

I looked at my watch, it was only nine—too early to go to bed. I looked in my bag for something to read and found a number of an English review which the postman had brought just as I was going out at the door of Villa Emmaus, and which I had taken with me. It was called *The Bibelot* and had been sent to me, I no longer know why. I turned the leaves and my attention was caught by a name which I had not seen for a long time: *Swinburne!* I began to read; it was a sort of interview in which the great English poet spoke of the point of view of certain of his poems. For instance, about *Tannhäuser*: "The real tragedy begins with Tannhäuser's return to Venus. A man who believes in Christ and is bound to Venus, a man who is lost after all his repentance—who longs for penance and suffering and is condemned to joyless pleasure—who is thrust down from hope blended with fear to fearless despair—here is the really tragic

element of the legend: that the knight who has denied Christ *still believes in Him*, that the lover who embraces Venus *does not believe in her*. The great lady of voluptuousness has only one rival for Tannhäuser's love: God. And when the Vice-Regent of God rejects the knight it is to her and only to her that he can return, there to await the day of judgment in grief and loathing and fear."

Thus spoke Swinburne—the Swinburne of my youth—he whose poem about "Our Lady of Pleasure" had been on all our young lips then, long ago, when we went out into life—and went astray:

> O mystic and sombre Dolores,
> our Lady of pain!

And listen—how had he not spoken himself later about this very poem—spoken of it and judged it as a Christian? In his comments on Dolores I read:

"Not all at once, not for ever, is the past slain and buried; the huntress pursues her fleeing prey which is still wounded and weak, just escaped from the claws of passion. The cruel hands, the passionate eyes are still bright and alluring—*Qui a bu, boira*—the feet are still drawn back to the old paths. Only by flight all through life, flight side by side with the goddess that redeems, can the long thraldom be broken and the slave escape from the goddess that devours. And alas! Not even then is it certain that he will be saved!"

We had *not* read *Dolores* thus, when we were eighteen —because we *could* not read thus yet. All poetry speaks the truth, the poet is he who unswervingly follows the law of life and speaks it to all the people—he is the proclaimer of the law. But most people have to be told the law by life itself.

I closed the number of *The Bibelot* and was again alone with the feebly-burning candle, the bare table, the small, semi-dark hotel room. On the opposite side of the square a locomotive kept on shunting back and forth

on the railway lines—I heard the long row of gradually weaker clanks made in a line of waggons when the engine is coupled on—

And I went on pondering.

V

We get up next morning at 5.30; it is Friday, September 3rd and from a calendar on the wall I see that to-day is the feast of Saint Rosalie, and therefore the name day of the stigmatic. I look out of the window in my room—on the opposite side of the street the long, low roof of the railway station, steam is rising behind it. Then the broad, flat country, with corn set up in stooks in the fields: green meadows and scattered trees, and small red houses along a horizon of dark spruce forest. Above all of it the endless, faintly blue sky.

In twos and threes we walk through the streets of Hasselt to the Franciscan church in the Rue des Récollets, where we intend to hear Mass. It is like a Danish country town—small two-storey houses with little gardens in front along tree-bordered streets. Workmen on their way to the factory meet us and salute the priest in our midst; a boy is practising cycling. Then we reach the church, a plain baroque church, barrel-roof, stucco ornaments; it is full to the last seat for it is the first Friday in the month.

At 7.40 departure to Schuelen. Sunshine. The white steam from the train drifts away across fields amongst many poplars.

Arrival at Schuelen at eight o'clock. A small waggonette awaits us and all the seven of us manage to find room in it. Then we drive out along a typically Flemish road, a road on a dyke between glimmering wet meadows. Wide views out upon flat, green stretches with cattle, and far away low, bluish forest ridges. We turn into a lane, a field road in the shade of green alders. Another

turn, through a long avenue of fir trees. Then a birch-wood; bell heather in bloom along the roadside. Out on a new dyke—on either side of it glittering water; the dew lies white in the roadside grass. The country reminds one of the land about Flamske, the native country of Anna Katharina Emmerich. Sitting opposite to me in the waggonette Fräulein Hofman tells us about her visit to the stigmatic in 1903, but Rosalie had already then borne the stigmata since her seventeenth year.

The road has gradually become so impassable that we men-folk have had to get down, leaving the ladies to drive on alone. We are in the midst of the great Limburg heath *la Campine*. On every side there is nothing but heather-covered plains with bushes, small, newly-planted firs, here and there an old oak or near a pool some rustling poplars. I walk a little behind the others, and in the stillness and sunshine the solitude about me becomes strangely mysterious. A bird twitters oddly and sweetly—what is it twittering? An oak suddenly rustles loudly, falls silent just as suddenly—like one that ceases speaking because he had nearly said too much. The road bends—the other three disappear behind the bushes and all at once I feel as if I might on this road meet *Someone*, meet one who was more than man . . . .

Then we are at the end of the wood and we get out to fields where cows are being moved—I hear the pegging-down mallet. A little way off, close up to the reddish-brown gravel road, there is a small, low-roofed farmhouse amongst poplars. I see our conveyance standing outside —so it is *there!* The farmhouse has a red roof; there is a well at one of the gables.

In through the farmyard—it is like a Danish peasant farm—some women and farm hands are standing a little way off and give us a churlish greeting. We walk through a low doorway into a large kitchen—here Fräulein Hofman comes towards us and introduces us to two peasant women, Rosalie's sister and sister-in-

law—and then, on the right of the door by which we have come in there is a door into the room of the stigmatic, the door leading into the supernatural—Fräulein Hofman opens the door—I go in behind her . . . .

A large room—red brick floor—on the left a window out to a garden . . . Sun through the window on the floor of red brick. There is another window just opposite the door—under this window there is a small table. There is a fireplace in the room, some furniture along the walls; clothes hanging on a nail. . . . Behind me the priest and the two German gentlemen come into the room. The ladies of our party are already here—there are others present too whom I do not know—altogether about twenty persons—most of them kneeling.

VI

Most of them kneeling . . . .

For there, in the bed behind the door on the right as you go in, lies the stigmatic. Sitting up in bed with pillows behind her, with her face turned towards the entrance door. She is sallow pale like wax, her eyes are closed like the eyes of one who is dying, a few strands of dark hair have slipped out from under the white night-cap—and the night-cap is stained with blood. . . . There are blood-stains in a regular ring right round the head . . . . and blood is trickling down under the cap, stopping and congealing on the high, arched brow . . . . Kneeling quite close to the bed and holding on to the bed-post to steady myself I see this . . . . And resting on the counterpane before me, a few inches from my eyes, I see the right hand of the stigmatic . . . . There is a longish wound on the back of the hand, in shape like a compressed, almost equilateral triangle, and quite covered by coagulated blood (for the stigmatisation had already begun early in the morning) . . . . I measure the wound: it is four-and-a-half centimetres long and between seven

and eight millimetres at the widest part—I do not see the left hand, it is underneath the counterpane.

The priest now begins a series of experiments to assure himself of the nature of the ecstasy in which Rosalie is lying rapt. Notwithstanding the closed eyes (as Fräulein Hofman insists that they are), she perceives everything, in particular does she distinguish—with other, more delicate senses than those usually possessed by human beings—sacred from profane, objects which have been blessed by the consecrated hands of a priest from things which have not been blessed. The priest now makes a test of this by holding relics, medals, crucifixes, rosaries, devotional pictures up before Rosalie——if they are blessed she salutes them quite correctly by bending her head, but in the opposite case she remains unmoved . . . . At one particular relic she seems to be seized with great emotion, she half rises up from her pillows and with her lips eagerly seeks to reach the holy object shown to her—"it was a relic of our Saviour's Cross," the priest whispers to me. On the other hand, an unblessed medal which *I* then hold out to the stigmatic leaves her quite cold, a piece of money makes her shrink back as if in pain . . . . "Don't do it again," Fräulein Hofman half whispers to me. But she bows her head before my rosary and kisses the crucifix upon it, and when the priest holds out his right hand towards her she bows before that too and kisses the three consecrated fingers. I try to obtain the same result, but none of my fingers excite the sympathy of the ecstatic. (And I notice that the Westphalian priest is not on this occasion wearing ecclesiastical dress.)

Then, at a little before eleven o'clock, Rosalie seems to awake, looks with blinking eyes up at the large crucifix hanging on the wall at the foot of the bed, crosses her arms over her breast . . . . There is a slight stir in the room, the door is opened and Rosalie's sister, a sturdy, fair-haired peasant girl with strong features and blue

eyes, comes in and spreads a blanket on the floor beside the bed. Without any of us knowing how it has happened, the stigmatic is suddenly lying prone on the floor on this blanket. We see now that she is fully dressed, in a long, red-and-black striped gown—and the gown has not become disarranged by the fall, it covers her right down to the feet, which are hidden in black woollen stockings. I stand just beside the head of the stigmatic and at the back of the nightcap I distinctly see watery blood-stains from the crown of thorns. Then there is a knock at the door—it is the local doctor who has come to see his patient. To him the stigmata are a disease, the course of which he has now followed for years, but on the character of which he does not wish to speak. He asks us to go out and stays a long while with the invalid.

Meanwhile we others have lunch. Even at Golgotha the Roman soldiers probably had their meals—perhaps even the disciples did not omit breakfast. We are only human. At the long table out in the kitchen we eat the food we have brought with us, and Rosalie's mother gives us good coffee in slop basins. Rosalie, she tells us, was born on July 16th, 1869, and was the third of ten children. At the age of seventeen the stigmata already appeared on her hands and feet—the crown of thorns came later—and now she is "eene arme zieke."[1] Fräulein Hofman translates the old woman's difficult Flemish for us, then we are shown a picture of Rosalie's father, long since dead, with the description under it: "Petrus Lambertus Put, echtgenoot van Philomena Abrahams, lid van de h. Familie, den levende Rosenkrans en den wekelijkschen Kruisweg." It is Rosalie's fair-haired, plump sister who with emotion reads these lines for us—he was a man of piety, old Petrus Lambertus, a member of three confraternities: the confraternity of the Holy Family, the living rosary and the confraternity of the weekly Stations of the Cross! Old Mother Put sheds a

[1] A poor invalid.

tear and drinks up her coffee, the sister-in-law comes in from the field, jangling a milk-pail . . . .

For though we are in the midst of the supernatural—we are in the midst of the natural too. I go outside for a moment and stroll about the farmyard. Through the open stable-door I see the cows standing in their stalls and whisking the flies away with their tails, pigs grunting in their styes—and round about the house there are wood-stacks, corn-ricks, potato-grounds, and then fields in sunshine right out to the low edge of woods of bluish-green firs and green spruce firs along the horizon of blue, slightly hazy sky. Everywhere sun, summer and stillness—the cheeping of birds, a slight buzzing of flies, a dog barking somewhere in the distance. The pigs are grunting, everything is peaceful, rural, natural . . . .

Then Fräulein Hofman appears at the open door to the kitchen and beckons eagerly. I go in again.

VII

I go in again—it is near the sixth hour. Along the walls everybody is standing up motionless, in expectation—I am the last. On the blanket beside the bed Rosalie is lying outstretched as before.

But she does not remain lying down for long. Suddenly a movement stirs through her, she puts her hands together underneath her, rises without losing hold of the rosary she has in her hand, stands up, totters—and falls. Rises again, remains standing—She is small and plump, her face is no longer pale, but suffused with colour . . . . She advances, a few tottering steps, all the time with closed eyes—falls a second time—She gets up once more, walks on. She does not jostle against any of us, strides on like a sleep-walker, walks round the room (only a few steps) until she has reached the window overlooking the garden. Then she falls for the third time—and this time not on her face but backwards . . . .

She falls, remains lying on her back—and now slowly spreads her arms right out on either side, while her feet take up the position (the right over the left) of the feet of Jesus on the cross . . . . It is the crucifixion. A sudden sharp pain shoots through her and makes her tremble from head to foot—it is the nails piercing her flesh . . . .

We have all followed her and are now all on our knees round about her invisible cross . . . . She lies quietly breathing, a faint colour in her cheeks, the face is oval and full, the eyes are persistently closed, only a twitching now and then, the lips are pale . . . . Relics are handed to her and she kisses them with a touching little movement of the pale mouth . . . . Just above her the window stands open to the verdant garden, the sun is shining outside, a bird is singing, a boy goes past whistling . . . .

"In Namen des Vaters und des Sohnes und des Heiligen Geistes," begins Fräulein Hofman, "let us say the Stations of the Cross."

Then, face to face with this living image of the Crucified we slowly say the fourteen Stations—from the condemning by Pilate to the laying in the tomb of a stranger . . . . *Via Crucis*, the Way by which every Christian must walk through life, if it is right with him . . . . "For whom he foreknew, he also predestinated to be made conformable to the image of his Son;—to put on Christ, *to put on the Crucified* . . . . "To everyone of us the Cross says: Have patience with me and carry me. In return I will carry you into heaven."

When the prayers are over, there is silence. I see the German priest bending down over Rosalie and whispering into her ear—a little after, her lips move, he listens, and rises in sudden, strong emotion . . . . "I put a question to her in Latin," he told me afterwards, and she answered me, I do not know in what language, but I understood it! It was a question concerning my future!" Again the infinitely painful lips of the stigmatic move, Fräulein Hofman stoops listening over her—"She is

praying for the two Protestants who are present here." (Herr Poetzold and Gerichtsrat Schultz were both Lutherans, I was told afterwards). "She calls upon all of us to have a great love of God and in all things to be resigned to His will."

Then a trembling seems to pass through the seer—Fräulein Hofman rises and asks us all to go out. The ecstasy is nearing its close and Rosalie would be miserable if she saw us all in the room in her normal state. The robust sister and the equally robust sister-in-law come in to help the invalid back to bed. As I go out at the door I hear a loud coughing behind me.

A short time passes, which I spend in the kitchen in completing the notes I had made in the room. I had been struck by some words spoken there beside Rosalie's cross—the German priest's words: "I put a question to her concerning my future." *I* too had a great question to ask, and I *had* asked, but *without words*, only by an interior turning to the soul of the favoured one . . . . Would she answer?

The door to the sick-room was opened behind me, Fräulein Hofman stood on the threshold and beckoned me in. There were already several there—one by one they came up to the bed where Rosalie was now lying awake and smiling. She was still wearing the blood-stained cap, but the forehead had been washed and the hands cleansed from blood; the triangular wound, however, was still visible, but the formation of the scar had already begun. In the course of the Friday, Fräulein had told me, the wound closed up altogether and the next day not even a mark of it was to be seen.

It was now *my* turn to approach the invalid and take my seat on the chair beside the bed; I was the last. Fräulein Hofman stood by, translating what I said in German into Flemish—ordinary words—a greeting from Fräulein Reinhard, a request for intercession . . . . Rosalie nodded and smiled, as if she knew quite well

that I had something else on my mind. I asked Fräulein Hofman's permission to be left alone with the stigmatic for a moment.

My request was granted. And now came some minutes in which I felt that which Raymond of Capua had felt six hundred years earlier by the sick-bed of Catherine of Siena—on that occasion when he did not recognise any longer the face of the little Mantellata, and *Another* spoke with Catherine's voice and said: "I am who am!" It was no longer the Flemish peasant girl who was looking at me, it was *Another*, a fairer and a greater. *Rosalie was no longer Rosalie*—the infinitely painful, infinitely compassionate look with which she contemplated me was the look with which the Good Shepherd contemplates the lost sheep which has gone astray amongst the thorns of the world. I spoke with her, I laid bare my whole heart as one lays it bare to one's only friend. And she understood what I said, and I understood her answer without knowing in what language I had put my questions, or in what tongue the answer had been given. I was no longer in any room, there were no walls about me, no ceiling above me, but high up there was an infinitely deep heaven, luminously blue, and an everlasting love poured down over me in rays of joy and peace. Cast down upon my knees I begged for a blessing for me and mine, *their* future and *my* future, and the hand with the wound of Christ made the sign of the cross over me.

SWEET DENMARK

Il est certain qu'il n'y a point de réalité sans confessions, *et qu'une fois qu'on a goûté à la réalité des confessions, toute autre réalité, toute autre essai paraît bien littéraire. Et même faux, feint. Puisque tellement incomplet.*—PÉGUY.

I

AFTER the long sojourn on the Rhine in the summer of 1909 and the visit to the stigmatised woman in Lummen I was again at home. It was autumn; soon winter would be at the door with its coal-cart.

But the September sun was still shining and I could still sit and work on my verandah, which was covered with Virginia creeper, and glancing up from the paper, look out upon the garden. The diary for September 24th says: "Eleven o'clock in the morning. Garden. Everything is luxuriant and abundant. The small fruit-trees are bending under their load of apples and pears. Escholtzias are in bloom in the flower-beds, also golden-brown and ochre-golden marigolds, pink begonias with delicate, fragile petals, white dahlias, Aaron's rod, fuchsias, blue lupins. Syrphus-flies like those in the garden in Svendborg flutter over the flowers, resting for a moment on quivering, almost invisible wings, then suddenly move with a start, again resting motionless in another place. All the hedges have grown higher this summer. Against our neighbour's red roof stands the reddish-yellow top of the sycamore in the fence. The sky is blue, cloudless."

"October 2nd. A radiant harvest morning. All the leaves are wet with dew. The sun rises in a sky of silver. Over the fields silver-blue mists, the distant trees in a fine silver-grey haze. Walks in the sunny, warm afternoon, first with my daughter, then with my eldest son. Evening walk with my wife in Bernstorff Park. Moonlight and marsh mists. We hear the owls hooting and flapping about in the dark foliage. Moonlight night; still, motionless leaves outside the window."

"October 10. Crisp, damp and cool morning of sunshine. Sparrows twittering. The last roses. Large drops of moisture on all twigs and stems and on the points of the drooping petals of the dahlias. A faint breath of air makes the poplars stir softly against the clear blue sky. The sun sparkles in the grass of the lawn and in the leaves of the espalier fruit-trees."

I was at home again, and was glad to be at home. This time I had come home via Kiel—Korsor. Notwithstanding the late season of the year, it was brilliant sunshine—people sat on the deck of the steamer without overcoats or wraps and looked out across the blue water. A silver stripe of sunshine ran like a wake behind us. Out in the horizon lay the long, low coast of Denmark—Funen like a blue line—on the other side the Smoland Islands and Zealand. All in long, low lines, a few streaks of forest—a few houses—a lighthouse. Then Korsor appeared ahead—a row of shining houses scattered along the shore. From the diary: "Funen disappears more and more in a blue haze—the coast of Zealand draws nearer—yellow sand-banks, dark stretches of forest, pale stubble-fields. Summer clouds lie like a long, vague mountain range over them.

"The Belt is deserted—only a solitary, rocking sailing-boat and a small steamer near land. Then a thick, brown smoke ascends in the western horizon—the ferry from Nyborg.

"Lenient customs examination at Korsor (the cour-

teous Danish question: 'You haven't anything new, have you?'), and then the elegant Danish second-class carriage, with photographs, handsomely framed in mahogany, of unexciting views of Danish market towns. The express runs between fields of green turnips and yellow stubble-fields. The sun goes behind a cloud, soon a great heavy, grey sky rests over the flat country. Extremely low houses with moss-green roofs. Under a sky growing darker and darker we approach Copenhagen. Roskilde—are the spires of the cathedral no higher than that? At last dark Sondermarken and grey, smoke-grimed Copenhagen."

This was the first impression. After the sojourn on the Rhine, where one always felt rock underfoot, Denmark seemed to me a country without firm ground under it. I felt as if I must go through when walking on the soft, muddy roads; during the first few days I involuntarily walked carefully.

But the sun came, and with it a radiant autumn. In the morning all the hedgerows were full of cobwebs sparkling with dew. In the evening Capella, blue and glittering, stood high in the moon-blue atmoshere and reminded me of the presbytery garden at Aichalden, three years ago. (Everything always reminded me, alas! of something else. And this "something else" often seemed to me of more value than what I had at present.)

I began to work, and from my memories of my visit to Lourdes that summer wrote a little book about the famous French place of pilgrimage. I wrote it in my dark study, from which, however, I could look out upon an autumn morning of brilliant sunshine. In the evening took a walk, sometimes with my wife, sometimes with one of my children. At that time, as in 1924, Mars was near the earth. "It looks," said my ten-year-old son Knud, "like a red-hot nail that has been hammered into the sky."

My collection of poems, *From the Depths*, was pub-

lished that autumn, as was also my translation of *The Lord of the World*, by Robert Hugh Benson. The problem in the apocalyptic novel of the English convert priest was just as much a problem in Denmark as in England. As it had justly been said in a review of the book in the German Centre paper, *Germania*, the theme in *The Lord of the World* is the clashing of two tone-colours: "the Lucifer mood of the defiant world-spirit and the Saviour-atmosphere of still and holy peace." All earthly happiness, earthly power, earthly civilisation, apostatises and goes over to Antichrist and the only ones remaining on the side of the Church are those who suffer, the poor and contemptible—all that is *inferior*. But because this is so there are moments in the life of the convert when he feels that he is placed between that brilliant civilisation and the suffering Saviour, when the mystery of humility and suffering crush him to the ground and when he is seized with fear: "Am I right when I despise the God of earthly progress and serve God in heaven?"

This was what Robert Hugh Benson had felt in his modern England, in the midst of a civilisation which can be recognised by its comfort, hygiene, material progress, social reforms—a civilisation which, practically speaking, is built up on a firm conviction that there is no other existence than the present, and that therefore the chief thing to be considered is to get as much happiness, as much enjoyment, as much ease, health, sport, travel, play-going, as many concerts, dances and afternoon teas out of life as possible.

Christianity—and possibly Catholic Christianity in particular, with its monasticism, its asceticism, its celibacy of priests—is the diametrical opposite, the irreconcilable antitheses of that modern ideal of natural, simple and contented humanity. This contrast, this antithesis, is more or less a leading theme in all Benson's writings. Algy Banister's words, "God is cruel," in *The Conventionalists*, might be used as the motto of a whole series

of the great Englishman's works. "God is cruel," for He takes away from us that which we want most to have and does not leave us in peace in the buffalo leather easy chair of modern culture, with the tumbler of whisky and the box of cigarettes conveniently to hand. And the divine cruelty goes further still. One may give up a little personal well-being, but what if the man in the buffalo leather easy chair is right? Suppose his solution of the problem of life is the right one? Through these doubts God sends Benson's heroes as through fire. "Was it possible," the last pope asks himself in *The Lord of the World*. "Was it conceivable that he and his college of twelve and his few thousands should be right and the entire consensus of the civilised world wrong? Was he not fighting for a lost cause, and not only a lost cause, but a bad cause, which was now at last suffering the defeat it deserved? Was not the tiara on his head the great extinguisher which had now been thrown on the scrap-heap for ever, and which should never more be used to put out the free light?" And further: "He (Pope Sylvester) could be seized with such an overwhelming desire to justify his doubts and be at peace with all the others, that it was with dread in his heart and with the feeling of forfeiting both truth and goodness that he kept hold of faith."

More than once I too had felt this tension between Catholic faith and modern culture—I too had suffered from this terrible feeling of "believing against knowledge and loving against truth." In the monastic solitude of La Rocca, Mogens Ballin and Padre Felice had agreed that it would have been better if Luther had been burnt. I, on the other hand, could not but ask myself how the world would have looked now if Luther had not lived. In a preface to Verlaine's *Poésies religieuses*, Huysmans had pointed out the fact that the best writers of the Church in the nineteenth century had come to her *from outside*. "It looks," said the old naturalist writer (convert, but

still naturalist), "as if the only gifted men to be found amongst Catholics, from Chateaubriand to Veuillot, are converts. It is also worthy of notice that those who have best defended the Church and her policy have not been educated by her. Lacordaire, Montalembert, de Falloux, de Broglie, Hello, Coppée, Drumont, Brunétière have all come from the university, not from the clerical schools."

Huysmans—who served the Church himself with the prose which he brought with him in his *sac au dos* from Médan—does not give any answer to his own question. Rather does he deepen the difficulty by adding: "Talent needs fresh air in order to unfold. It is not by walking about with lowered eyes, but by looking round and reading a great deal that one creates a form for oneself and shapes one's ideas. It is unavoidably necessary to study the profane writers, who alone possess a style. Consequently, as artists the Church has only those who come to her fully armed and who in her service employ the weapons which they have learned to use in the enemy's camp. One must have lived to be able to write. Talent, then, is a fruit of sin? I will strive not to believe it," the old naturalist concludes cautiously. One is not in doubt, though, that in *his* mind, too, a sting is burning —that in *his* conscience too a fear is gnawing—the fear of having betrayed something valuable and of now being amongst those who would put out the light of the spirit and extinguish the sacred fire of art.

I had given utterance to a similar doubt when (in 1903) I wrote in *The Pilgrim Book*: "Why can I not live as the others live—with a simple faith in development and progress, without Church and without dogma, without a God and without a devil, but day by day calmly and peacefully occupied in work, in the fulfilment of duty, in literary interests, play-going? Why are the others so easily contented with this, and why does it all seem so little to me? Are they wiser than I, greater than I,

better than I, those worthy, honest workers of the intellect in my own country—and am I one who resists the times, who kicks against the goad, a criminal against humanity, a sinner against the electric light? Are the others the true faithful, whom a good conscience tells that they have a Father in heaven and an everlasting home beyond the stars?"

In other words—they who did *not* call themselves Christians, they were the true Christians—we, on the other hand, who wanted to bear the name of Christians, were in reality the enemies of Christ, because we were the enemies of progress, the enemies of liberty, of light, of life. . . . In a letter from my friends in Villa Emmaus, at Coblenz, there was a little picture with the inscription: *Leiden wir mit Christus und für Christus.* "Yes," I added, "if we only knew always that we suffer with Him and for Him, everything would be easy. But it is just that certainty that I lack!"

It was in that month of October that the execution of the Spanish anarchist Ferrer aroused a strong anti-Catholic movement all over the world. Priests were assaulted in the streets of Rome and the mob tried to storm the convents and monasteries. On the Aventine, outside Santa Prisca, which I knew so well, crowds of people had shouted for a whole hour: "Death to the nuns! Down with the convents!" In the daily paper, *Kobenhavn*, at that time strongly free-thinking, Dr. Frederik Poulsen had written against "that noxious beast, the Catholic Church." An article by myself in *National-tidende* provoked one of those anonymous attacks in which the keen brains and pointed pens of *Politiken* were experts. "You have fallen amongst thieves," A. C. Larsen said to me the same day when I put in an appearance at the Royal Library.

After having finished the book on Lourdes and written an article on Siena for Tilskueren, I again turned to Saint Catherine and found (as always) strength and

courage in this holy woman. Her fourteenth century had not been much better than the twentieth was now. . . . "We have a new age of martyrdom before us," she wrote to her disciples.

October came to an end and with All Saints came November. I quote from the diary: "Nov. 1. After a night of white moonlight and motionless calm a morning (at 7 a.m.) when the moon sinks like a luminous shell of mother-of-pearl through the deep-blue, glassy clear sky." Same day, 11 a.m. "At St. Andrew's Church to fetch the children, who are at High Mass. The last light, the last leaves. A cool breeze—warm sun where it is sheltered. The round domes of the chestnut trees in the avenue like a rampart of gold up over the hill. Mass is only half-way through. From within the church I hear *Benedictus qui venit*. . ."

II

The time now begins when I became a lecturer abroad. At first in Germany, then in Belgium, later in other countries—Switzerland, France, Italy.

It began with an invitation to Aix-la-Chapelle. If it was a success in Charlemagne's old capital, other lectures were to follow in the Rhineland and the Catholic towns of Westphalia. The whole lecturing tour was arranged by an energetic young ecclesiastic whose acquaintance I had made in 1909, when I wrote the book about Paula Reinhard at Villa Emmaus, near Coblenz. (Many threads in my life were to be spun out from—and were already spinning out from—that visit to Villa Emmaus. For instance, my journey to Lourdes and my book about it.)

Heinrich Sädler was, when I first met him, in the early thirties. He was fair, short rather than tall, thin, of delicate health, but he kept himself up by means of careful diet and never-yielding energy. He belonged to a well-to-do family in Aix-la-Chapelle and had taken the

(modest) post of assistant priest in the little village of Grau-Rheindorf because it was near the university town of Bonn, and because it left him time for study. At that time he was preparing, for his doctor's degree, a thesis on Hebbel's *Moloch* and was in other fields an eager student of literature, an art lover, and altogether interested in culture. As a matter of course he belonged to the *Kölner-Richtung*, read *Über den Wassern* and *Hochland*, detested *Der Gral*, the *Trier-Richtung* and the integral Catholics, but fervently admired Enrica Händel-Mazzetti, Nanny Lambrecht, Thrasolt and Paul Keller. He was well acquainted with all modern North German literature and even had Otto Erich Hartleben and Otto Julius Bierbaum in his book-case (though under lock and key). He listened with delight to what I told him of Catholic literature in France. He had read Francis Jammes on his own account—"ein famoser Kerl"—had very friendly feelings for France and had spent six months in Rouen to learn French.

As pre-arranged by letter, this new friend of mine met me at the station in Cologne to go with me to Aix-la-Chapelle. There I was given hospitality by a highly-placed government official—Justitzrat Gatzen—and suddenly found, to my joy, that I was on the soil of Pfaffendorf. For Gatzen was a nephew of Franz Reinhard; together with Frau Maria Mencken he had accompanied poor, suffering Paula on her pilgrimage to Lourdes. "Gatzen, what a man!" I wrote that evening in my diary, "full of life, uprightness, power, reminding one of Godefroi Kurth." In the evening I went with Sädler to visit some relations of his—the daughters, Fraulein Gerda and Fraulein Nini, sang my *Manon* songs at the piano (I did not know that they had been set to music, nor that they had been translated into German!). The next day I gave the lecture, and the papers were favourable in their reports of it. The evening was pleasantly spent with the Gatzers; amongst other guests I made the acquaintance

of the Aix-la-Chapelle cathedral building inspector, Buckremer, the same who, many years later, was to build the Catholic church in Aalborg. On coming into my room afterwards I found a post-card from my eldest son, who was undergoing a cure at the Sanatorium in Vejle, with the contents: "March 5th. Both blackbird and chaffinch are singing, and I should like most of all to go far away from here, to the north, with the sun at my back." In the diary I wrote: "I think of ten years ago, when I went about alone and unknown in the streets of Aix-la-Chapelle. . . . Remember my visit to the hill with the Stations of the Cross outside the town . . . my resolutions there! Lord, Thou sawest my heart—to Thee I commend my life henceforward."

Next day I made an excursion with Heinrich Sädler across the Dutch frontier to the great Jesuit college of Valkenburg. There I met again my old confessor of Stenosgade, Father Joseph Schmidt. His last station in Denmark had been Esbjerg. "Did you make many converts there?" asked my young German friend eagerly. "Four," said Father Joseph Schmidt, with the imperturbable calm peculiar to him; "but they have all happily seceded again!" Just then there was a knock at the door—it was the well-known art historian, Father Stephan Beissal, who wanted to see me. The old man came towards me with bright, sparkling eyes and said gaily: "Here is an old crock who will not think of getting buried!" We all laughed and he went on: "I really ought only to go about here as a ghost!"

Then Sädler and I went back to Grau-Rheindorf, where I was to stay at the presbytery. The house overlooked the Rhine, just where the little river Sieg flowed into it on the opposite side. In the evening my host and I sat in the walled garden out towards the river. It was moonlight, the Rhine was rippling and gurgling. In a boat out on the river someone was singing Goethe's wonderful "Füllest wieder Busch und Thal mir mit

Nebelglanz." Nearer and nearer came the boat, louder and louder sounded the beautiful male voice—only Germans, Italians and Swedes could sing like that. Then it came, the last wonderful verse :

Was von Menschen nicht gewusst,
oder nicht bedacht,
durch das Labyrinth der Brust
wandelt in der Nacht. . . .

The next day Sädler and I went in to town to pay calls and prepare for my lecture there ; it was to be given in the "Beethovenhalle." First I went to see my old friend Dr. Cardauns, and had the pleasure of presenting Sädler to the great Centre journalist. The next visit was to the professor of philosophy at Bonn university, Adolf Dyroff, whose book on Rosmini I had read. The visit lengthened into an hour's talk with him and his fair-haired, slender and Scandinavian-looking wife. As a finish to our morning we were invited to lunch in the villa suburb of Kessenich, with a family named von Cohausen. I met there several members of the local Catholic nobility, and made the acquaintance of a young Franciscan poet, Father Matthew Schneiderwirth. The lawyer, Professor Nikolaus Hilling, made a friendly speech of welcome to the foreign guest, to which the guest replied in verse—and in German :

Ich fuhr vor vielen Jahren
hier vorüber ;
der graue Frühlingstag
ward trüb' und trüber.

Als Fremder unter Fremden
hergezogen
ich grüsste müd' hinauf
zum Rolandsbogen

und ahnte nicht, was mir,
dem unbekannten,
später begegnen sollt'
in deutschen Landen,

dass deutscher Freunde Schar
des Fremden harrten
in Güte, Lieb' und Treu
über Erwarten.[1]

After lunch we walked in the garden. It was St. Benedict's day, March 21st; the sun was shining, the first snowdrops had come up, a bunch of them was handed to me. Then we escorted Father Matthew to his monastery on Kreuzberg, where I saw the art historian, Father Beda Kleinschmidt, and the historian, Father Gisbert Menge (whose book on Brother Egidius of Assisi had at one time been of great use to me). Sädler and I then went down from the monastery to the village of Poppelsdorf to take the tram. We sat in the market-place a while, waiting; dusk was falling, the air grew damp and had a spicy scent, as of young birch foliage. Again we heard singing—the full-toned song welling up from the melancholy heart of Germany. Some children were walking round in a circle, as if in a game, but the song was no nursery rhyme, it was the old, mournful: "Es ist bestimmt in Gottes Rat, das man vom liebsten, was man hat, muss scheiden. . . ."[2] Then the tram came. When we were seated in it under the electric

[1] Ought I to have thought of these verses when—only two years later—I wrote "Klokke Roland"? Alas! I did think of them—I thought of all that Germany had hitherto been to me, Schumann's and Schubert's Germany, the old land of romance, where Brentano and Chamisso, Uhland and Wilhelm Muller, Eichendorff and Heine had sung . . . But Belgium was laid waste—and Rheims was in flames.

[2] It is decreed in the councils of God, that from what one holds most dear one must be parted.

light I said to Sädler: "Eichendorff?" "No," he answered, "Ernst von Feuchtersleben."

From Bonn I went on to Cologne, Paderborn, Münster, there to give the same lecture, which was really a reading of selected chapters from *The Pilgrim Book*. On the way to Limburg an der Lahn I had the happiness of seeing Villa Emmaus again, and, in compliance with Fräulein Reinhard's wish, putting the finishing touch to the manuscript of the book about her sister, not yet published. The diary says:

"March 30. 6 o'clock evening. In my room in Villa Emmaus, at the wide-open window. Again enfolded in the wonderful, conventual peace of Emmaus. Outside the sky is grey, the air mild and calm. A last bird is twittering, the first bat darts past.

"April 1st. Weather like the first of May in Denmark. After having worked from nine till eleven, for a moment in the garden. The morning mists are still lying like distant haze over the mountains on the other side of the Rhine, but in the garden the sunshine is warm, golden crocuses flame in the grass, the chestnut tree has large, bright buds, the buds of the magnolias are swelling, bursting, are already white at the points. Bees are swarming low down over the warm grass where the violets show blue and the last dewdrops are sparkling. Down in Pfaffendorf bedding is hanging out of all the windows to be sunned, children are playing and shouting, over from Coblenz comes the sound of military music."

From Pfaffendorf I walked over to Ehrenbreitstein to visit the house in which Clemens Brentano was born (I was still busy with the plan of writing a book about this romantic poet). It is the same house to which young Goethe came in 1772, where he paid his court to Brentano's mother, the handsome Maximiliane la Roche, and withdrew in time. In all essentials the house is still standing as it was then, and beneath its windows the old

Rhine flows on unchanged. But there was no railway in Brentano's time, no tug-steamers "zu Berg," and "zu Thal" on the river, no iron bridge with electric trams across it and no Prussian monument in vile taste over on "Deutscher Eck."

Partly for the sake of Brentano, partly with the thought of a book on Saint Elisabeth, I made an excursion from Limburg to the neighbouring Marburg, where the local keeper of records, Dr. Albert Huyskens, was kind and helpful. I saw the Brentano places—Savigny's house—"der Forsthof"—"Bettinenthurm"—and felt nearer than ever to the romantic pilgrims of a hundred years ago. "And one morning in pouring rain I stand before Elisabethenkirche. The church in all its slender beauty rears up its reddish walls and grey towers under a veil of running rain and of purling water from the dragons' heads (like silver threads in a veil). I walk about the square in front of the church for half an hour or so; my happiest hours have been spent on such rainy days in the square before an old church." (The diary, April 10th.) In the evening of the same day, on the way from my hotel to supper with the hospitable Dr. Huyskens, I walk for a while up and down the quiet, deserted Renthofstrasse. "Against the moon-grey air stands the dark outline of the old castle; in the buildings down the mountain side lights show here and there; from a house which I pass comes the plaintive sound of a violin and from the streets below me steps and voices, ringing clear in the crisp air of the spring evening. Clouds pass before the moon—and I think of Brentano, of Saint Elisabeth, of the letters from kings and emperors which I saw to-day in the archives, of all the emptied tankards I saw standing dusty in the museum, of all perished happiness and misery. It is an April evening, as in 1887, at that time when I went out to meet happiness on a road where my feet trod softly in fallen poplar catkins. I look back upon all my life and feel like that Limburg cathedral master-

builder who paid for the beauty of his work with an everlasting anguish of the heart."

On the return journey from Bonn I went again to Villa Emmaus, and Fräulein Reinhard then told me, carefully and considerately, that the official good-will I had met with on my lecturing tour concealed not a little criticism. It was found, in the modern-minded circles, that partly I was too mediæval in being continually engaged in the study of saints and mysticism, partly it was considered that I had taken too little pains with my lectures, and this was put down to pride. "It is thought that you have now a great opinion of yourself and think you can take liberties with people!" I gave an evasive answer when Fräulein Reinhard ceased speaking and contemplated me with a certain anxiety in her grey eyes—it is difficult to assert that one is not proud. . . . In my diary I wrote: "It is not true that I think 'I can take liberties with people.' But with still greater force than before I feel like the little skipper lad from Svendborg, feel that I have climbed too high and that I should like best to get out of it all, to creep into a hole and never show myself again. Why, I have always felt so sorry for the poor people who came to listen to me! As if I were a Björnson, a Brandes—a handsome man or a great talent! How, indeed, have I dared even to *show* myself? And the truth: that I have only undertaken these lectures for the sake of earning money—that behind my carelessness in preparing them are my harassing and difficult circumstances—nobody who only sees the outside would believe it: the poet who travels from place to place and is fêted. . . ."

In these circumstances it was a comfort to me on my return to Bonn to find amongst my letters a little note written in French in a fine, old-fashioned hand and signed Emil Hoskier. I knew who Hoskier was, for I had read Morten Pontoppidan's beautiful book, *Fru Elise Hoskier*, and had written an article on it for Oskar V. Andersen's

review, *Varden*. A kind friend in Copenhagen had sent the article to Paris, where Hoskier was Danish consul-general, and the old financier, who revered his wife's memory with a devotion amounting almost to a cult, had then asked his Danish correspondent whether there was anything he could do for me. These discussions, which did not come to my knowledge until later, resulted in the letter which I received in Grau-Rheindorf and which contained the lines : "I shall always be ready to do you a service and to ease the life of work that you lead. . . . Do not thank me; it is to you that it should be said, 'Vergelt's Gott !' not to me."

A day or two later I received the little book in which Hoskier had collected and published the *Pensées et méditations* left by his late wife (she perished in the charity bazaar fire in Paris on May 4th, 1897). I opened it and found the following sentences, which I underlined : "Go hence, ye joys of life, longings of the heart, fancy's dreams—flee hence ! Let me begin at last a serious life, and let not the power of imagination lead me into dangerous paths." I commented upon this as follows : "Strong and vivid feeling that (1) I must above all live for my children, and (2) that I must therefore be resigned to growing older. It is a question of *willing* to grow old, *willing* to say, 'I have had enough enjoyment,' *willing* to live for others" (April 13th. Holy Thursday).

At Sadler's request I wrote, before leaving Grau-Rheindorf, a small autobiography which he intended to use in an article about me in a review.

I concluded it thus : "As day succeeds day it becomes clearer and clearer to me that the whole of my life proves the truth of the promise given in the Gospel by Jesus to him who leaves anything for His sake. I gave up my old friends, my old world, all my past. But I have received compensation according to the words of scripture and the Saviour's promise : *Centuplum accipiet*—he shall receive again a hundredfold."[1]

[1] Matthew xix, 29.

THE NARROW WAY

The last years preceding the World War became for me an unbroken series of going abroad and coming home, a continual to and fro. In the summer of 1911, accompanied by my wife, I had been present at the millenary festival of Normandy, in Rouen, after which I went to London alone in order to write about the coronation of King George V. Having finished my journalistic work, I went down to verdant Hertfordshire to see Robert Hugh Benson, a visit of which I have given an account in one of my books.[1]

From England I made my homeward course by way of Belgium, where I visited my friends, the Belpaires, in Antwerp, and was told by them that Monseigneur Simon Deploige, President of the *Institut de Philosophie Thomiste*, at the University of Louvain, wished to make my acquaintance. In this old Catholic college the Norwegian convert, Christian Moller, had at one time found a refuge (his son was the author, Abbé Moeller, editor of the review, *Durendal*); Monseigneur Deploige was thinking of offering me a similar position. For the present he was content to organise a lecturing tour for me in the most important Belgian towns: Liege, Louvain, Brussels, Tournai, Mons, Antwerp, Ghent, Bruges. It was on this lecturing tour, late in the autumn of 1911, that I was received for the first time by Cardinal Mercier and at Brussels formed a friendship with the Carton de Wiart family.

Then, in the same autumn, I went to Paris in order

[1] *Indtrykog Stemningen.* (Moods and Impressions).

to make the personal acquaintance of Emil Hoskier. It was in his house that I met the youngest of his six daughters, the wise, refined Henriette and her husband, Jean Brunhes, now a world-famous geographer. I quickly formed a friendship with this young couple—they were, *inter alia*, enthusiastic partisans of the social policy of Leo XIII—and a first-fruit of this friendship was an invitation to go with them to Fribourg in Switzerland, where Jean Brunhes was then a professor at the university, in order to repeat my lecture on Saint Francis of Assisi there. The rapidly formed plan was realised with equal rapidity—the lecture was given in both French and German and procured me a number of interesting acquaintances—the sociologist, Max Thurmann, whose books I had studied when writing *Our Lady of Denmark*; the literary historian, Pierre Maurice Masson, author of three interesting works on Rousseau, on Fénélon, on Lamartine, and soon to be one of the countless fallen in the Great War;[1] the German Franciscan scholar, Gustav Schnüser; the Swiss woman novelist, Noelle Roger; the Dominicans, Father Mandonnet and Father Weiss (the Apologetics of the latter had at one time rendered me good service); the historian, Father Hilarin Felder, and several more. Maurice Masson and his wife drove me in a motor-car out to the neighbouring Fillisdorf and introduced me to the "uncrowned king" of Canton Fribourg, the then almost omnipotent Christian-democratic politician, Georges Python. Some time earlier there had already been plans of connecting me with the Catholic college in Fribourg—and seeing that nothing was as yet decided about Louvain, the visit to the chief of the Canton might be of importance. Python gave me a jovial welcome, we drank tea in his comfortable Swiss chalet and contemplated the Jura mountains, but

[1] A collection of P. M. Masson's *Lettres de Guerre* was published in 1916, by Hachette in Paris, and is one of the finest of the many books of this kind.

nothing further came of the visit. Nor was I yet mature enough to be away from home.

In the autumn of the following year came the twenty-fifth anniversary of the publication of my first little book (*Verser*) and a circle of friends, with Mogens Ballin as their leader, resolved to celebrate the event. During the summer I had been in Siena, where I had begun my biography of Saint Catherine, but when I received the invitation to come home I accepted. Thus it came about that on November 5th, 1912, I found myself once more on the Gedser ferry. The Baltic lay vast and grey under the vast, grey sky. Wild geese were flying low down over the water—I had seen them last over Vejle Fjord. . . . Out of the fog emerged on one side the light-ship, on the other the pitching and tolling bell-buoy. Then came the long, low coast—Gedser, with the first scarlet-coated postmen—the brown fields and small ponds of Falster and a little house with moss-grown thatched roof and yellow lime-washed walls, on the shore of a flat, grey sea—Denmark!'

The festive event took place on November 26th in "Grundtvig's House." The Bishop, Monsiegneur von Euch, presided. The official speeches were made by the editor of *Varden*,[1] Oskar V. Andersen, by Father Ludvig Günther from Ordrup Mount, by Father Breitung, also of Ordrup, and by the friend from Assisi, Mogens Francesco Ballin. Later, unofficial speeches were made by Valdemar Rordam; by Pastor Ludwigs, now (Protestant) Bishop of Aalborg; by my old school-fellow from the school at Norrebro, Pastor—now Dean—Hans Koch. Finally a young man stood up, whom I saw then for the first time, a ruddy-faced, blue-eyed Danish theological student of twenty (but his hair was jet-black!)—Peter Schindler. "You have taught us Danish Protestants to make the sign of the cross," the enthusiastic young Grundtvigian cried to me; "you have

[1] The Beacon.

taught us to bend the knee before the holiest!" Among those present at the banquet there were also some of the old friends of a youth in common—Valdemar Vedel, Johan Rohde,[1] Harald Slott-Moller, Agness Slott-Moller, Ludvig Find. I even glimpsed, in the distance, the gallant head of Henrik Pontoppidan.[2]

• • • •

Three months later I left Denmark to return to the post at Louvain, to which I had been appointed in the spring of 1912, and to my work in Siena. I have once written what these three months were, for they were not worse nor better than so many, many other months, so many, many other years. *God's Quern* was grinding again —and the grindstones were harder than ever. There was only one rescue: flight. One dark and sleeting evening in the beginning of March I saw from the rear platform on the train the name-board Charlottenlund disappear behind me in the darkness. Seven years were to pass before I saw it again.

(FIRST CHAPTER OF A NOVEL OF A JOURNEY WHICH WAS WRITTEN IN REALITY, NOT ON PAPER.)

The D-train Hamburg-Cologne had passed Osanbrück. Perhaps more passengers would come in at Münster, but in any case, one made preparations for the night. A bald-headed young commercial traveller, as round as a globe, took off his boots and put on slippers, spread out a handkerchief under his head and settled himself comfortably in his corner near the door; soon he was snoring. An elderly gentleman took out his watch and wound it up. An officious young man got up, asked leave without waiting for an answer, drew the violet shade in front of the lamp in the ceiling. Gabriel Poulsen, M.A., of Copenhagen, had the corner

[1] An artist.
[2] One of the foremost of Danish novelists.

seat by the window, facing the engine. He always took care to be at the station in good time to be sure of getting a good seat. Above all he could not endure sitting backwards when travelling.

He sat in his corner, almost with his back to his neighbour. The curtain was drawn before the window, but there was a gap through which he could keep an eye on what was to be seen outside. That was another of his peculiarities, that he could not bear to be quite shut in. Now he sat peeping between the tightly stretched curtain and the window frame and saw the sky and the stars over a wide, dark country—the broad peasant country of Westphalia. Here and there lights could still be seen in a lonely farmhouse ; in a house quite near the railway-line he looked through a curtainless window for an instant into a room that was lit up, in which a man was undressing.

It was not only in a physical sense that Gabriel Poulsen turned his back on his fellow-travellers. None of them had molested him, they were all peaceable and jovial Germans. Nevertheless, there was in him an odd, unconquerable feeling of remoteness from them, a remoteness bordering on hostility. He could not find any better word for it—it was hostility. Deep down in him there was something that caused him to feel that he was different from them—not at all above them—by no means —nor beneath them—though perhaps it was rather that (or was he mistaken ?). No, neither above them nor beneath them—and by no means beside them—only different—and slightly haughty at being different—and a little unhappy at being different. He would not speak to them, he would not even see them, he would not be aware of anything but the faster and faster speed of the D-train (Had it reached seventy kilometres an hour ?), the stars outside in the dark, and the heart that was giving him so much pain in his breast.

It was a quite literal pain that he had in his heart.

The doctors whom he had consulted now and then had listened to his heart-beats and explained that there was something hard in the second of the heart sounds (Was it called systole or diastole ?). One of them had spoken of a valvular defect. Another had talked about the nerves of the heart. One of them had given him *Strofantus*, another had been content with valerian. In particular there were most unpleasant moments when it was as if a plate of some hard material turned right round in this triangular muscle. . . .

But at the present moment there was nothing but a slight pain. It hurt only a little—in fact, it was rather pleasant. It contributed to his mood of remoteness, of being a stranger. Pain in the stomach or the appendix would not have had this effect. There was nothing exalted about catarrh of the stomach or appendicitis, while there was something distinguished about a faulty heart. Gabriel Poulsen had no objection to it.

For a while he tried to sleep, but without success. Round about him all the Germans, five in number, were snoring—he alone was awake. Outside the window it was no longer Westphalia—the train had passed Recklinghausen, *the black country* was beginning. The country he knew so well from earlier journeys, the Ruhr district, with its forests of ever-smoking chimneys, its ever-flaming blast furnaces, all its fantastic confusion of factories, mines, bridges, smelting-furnaces, slowly-gliding baskets. Soon it would be Oberhausen with the gigantic "Gutehoffnungshütte." There was one of the great smelting-works already flashing past—a blast furnace was just being opened—a red-hot stream threw its glare out into the night—black figures were skipping about in it. . . . He had often travelled that way and had a predilection for this country. The names of the towns told him so much—Wanne, Gelsenkirchen, Altenessen—there was a fierce, hostile beauty about them. He repeated the names to himself—Wanne, Bochum, Gelsenkirchen,

Oberhausen, Altenessen. . . . Geographical names generally made a deep impression upon him, affected him like the titles of books. He was very fond of reading maps, railway time-tables and booksellers' catalogues. Often he was disappointed in the places and the books corresponding to the names and the titles—he had dreamed of something more perfect.

III

I arrived at Louvain in the evening of March 3rd and was at once installed by Monseigneur Deploige in the house of one of his friends and colleagues, Professor Armand Thiery. This very wealthy man was originally an advocate, had later become a priest and was now teacher of physics at the *Institut de Philosophie Thomiste* founded by Deploige. He lived alone in a large house in the Place Sainte Gertrude, next to the old Gothic church, and it was an easy matter for him to let me have a couple of rooms at the top of the house—with a wide view over the town to the beautiful cathedral of Saint Pierre—that which only a year and a half later was to fall a victim to German fires—but who thought of that in March 1913?

My stay in the Belgian university town, however, was not to be of long duration. Easter came early that year and in the Easter holidays my friend and superior, Deploige, went to Cannes—would I care to come with him? I was very glad to do so and we stayed there together for a couple of weeks, in a small pension for ecclesiastics and—as it was laughingly said of me—semi-ecclesiastical persons. . . The views of my Belgian friends on France differed somewhat from those with which I had stepped on to French soil for the first time; indeed, I had begun to modify slightly my first enthusiasm after what I had gradually learned about the French free-thinking régime. Maurice Barres had just then

published his book, *La grande Pitié des Eglises de France ;* an article, entitled, "Moonlight Talk in Cannes" (sent home in April, 1913), reprinted in my book, *In Outermost Belgium*,[1] shows that I had my eyes open to what was going on about me in those years of anti-clericalism. For exactly the same thing was then happening in France which certain pedagogues now wish to carry out in Denmark—namely, that children should be *protected* from those who want to teach them religion. I reproduce, from the article above-mentioned, the train of thought of French radicalism of that time : "All the philosophy of the Revolution is concerned with the idea of freedom. Man has to be *free*, i.e. he is to obey no other authority than that of *reason* and *conscience*. That is the standpoint of the French Republic. But it follows from this that children ought not to be brought up in any kind of religious conviction. No one has a right to influence their thought and conscience. . . . There are, however, those who will do so. . . . There is, for instance, the mother who prays with her child at bed-time. There is the priest who preaches Christianity from his pulpit. From them the child must be *protected*. The child is not yet able to defend its liberty itself—therefore the government must be its guardian and protect its soul. The point is to prevent children from becoming obscurantists and reactionaries—in a word, from not becoming *free*. And in order to secure this freedom one must use force, i.e. close the churches and drive away the priests."

I had a sensitive ear for the dirge over the Church of France, that was sinking into ruins—twelve years later I was to listen to it again in the dilapidated convent courtyard in Montmajour.[2] But to forget my own need for *la grande pitié des églises de France* was beyond my powers. One day I had gone from Cannes over to *Ile*

[1] Translated into English under the title "A War Pilgrim," Burns and Oates, 1917.

[2] See my book *Af Olivoutraets Frugt*. (The Fruit of the Olive Tree).

Saint Honorat, which is situated just outside the town (and is the old *Lerinum*); I stayed an evening, a night and a day, with the silent white monks out there. I had expected to meet the author, Adolphe Retté, a convert like myself (we had at one time read aloud from his little book, *Une belle dame passa*—in the days of "The Tower." But Retté was absent on a journey; I was allowed to occupy his cell. It was on the side towards the sea; all night I could hear the breakers of the Mediterranean surging against the rocks. Before daybreak, as early as four o'clock, I was in the latticed stall turned towards the monastery church and from there heard the white monks' hymns of praise surging and swelling like the sea outside:

"Praise the Lord, oh my soul. He looks in mercy upon our iniquities, He healeth all our infirmities.

"He delivereth us from destruction, in His goodness he fulfilleth all our desires, He reneweth our youth like the eagle's.

"Therefore we rejoice, O Lord, at the days when Thou didst humble us, at the years when we suffered.

"For now is the snare torn asunder and we are set at liberty. . . ."

Up towards the lonely latticed stall rose the Latin words, borne on the solemn waves of the Gregorian chant: *Laqueus contritus est, et nos liberati sumus. . . .*

Yes, they were free men, those white monks down there; the snare of the world was torn asunder and they were set free, in the holy freedom of the children of God never to do anything but the heavenly Father's will. . . .

Whilst I—yes, now they sounded from below, the words which Mogens Ballin had said to me at parting four years ago—*Salvum me fac, Deus, quoniam intraverunt aquae usque ad animam meam*, "Save me, O God, for the waters are come in, even unto my soul." And still I had mournfully to sigh: "Lord, let not them be ashamed

in me, who seek Thee, the God of Israel." It had not yet become different—I had still to confess that my life belied my teaching, that I was only a mouthpiece of Christianity, not its apostle. For of the apostle it must be true as it was of the Master: *coepit facere et docere*, "He began to work and to teach"—first deeds, then preaching! And what were not the words in the rule of the Order of Saint Francis—*et omnes praedicent exemplo*, "and all must preach by the power of example" ("And that is the best sermon," added the great saint, who always wanted himself to be a model to his disciples). All that might be read in my books, but it could not be read in my life. . . . "Save me, O Lord, for the waters are come in, even unto my soul. . . ."

IV

On the way back from Cannes to Louvain (Monseigneur Deploige stayed for some time yet at the Riviera) I broke my journey in Paris to visit Emil Hoskier, and again met in his house my friends of Fribourg, Jean and Henriette Brunhes. They lived in a villa owned by Hoskier in Bellevue (Grande Rue 1)—a rather large property, consisting of two houses, a big one and a small one, besides a gardener's lodge, a porter's lodge and other accessories. From the park-like garden there was a view down over the Seine and over immense Paris, now veiled in a haze, now bright and sunny, with the Eiffel Tower and, alas! the "Great Wheel" in the foreground, but furthest out the shining dome on Sacré Coeur. Here the Brunhes lived when they were in Paris, here I was also given a *pied à terre* when visiting the French capital. Generous as M. Hoskier was, he placed a complete apartment in the larger of the two houses at my disposal-and gave the porter and his wife orders to wait upon me. I found some slight difficulty in filling the unaccustomed *rôle*, especially when the porter's wife

came up in the evening to ask what Monsieur would like to have for dinner on the following day! *Monsieur*—that was myself! Of course it was really the brisk and active, middle-aged Madame Vieillard who decided the menu—for myself I had really only one wish, that of getting a *petit suisse*, a small, fine cream cheese, daintily wrapped up in paper, for dessert. But so far from letting me feel my culinary ignorance, Madame Vieillard always tried to give me the impression that it was I who decided—"*Mais oui, Monsieur! C'est ça, Monsieur! Parfaitement, Monsieur!*" And I never had any reason to complain of the decisions thus arrived at by myself.

Through Jean Brunhes I was now introduced into literary Paris—that is to say, said Henriette Brunhes, "in all that part of it which is accessible to you." It was no small part, however; reckoned in *arrondissements* it was the sixth, seventh, eighth, ninth, sixteenth; as to buildings, it was bounded, roughly speaking, by the dome of the Académie, the towers of Saint Clothilde, Trocadéro, the Arc de Triomphe, Saint Augustin. To a *another* left bank than, for instance, Sophus Claussen's; the fifth *arrondissement*, with the Sorbonne and College de France, was outside the boundaries. Nor had I much to do with the Jardin du Luxembourg and nothing at all with Café Procopé. In addition, it was in a lesser degree the *right* bank of the Seine; it included neither the great boulevards nor the night cafés. In a literary respect I had left *La Plume* and *Mercure de France* and had been adopted by the *Revue des Deux Mondes* and *Le Correspondant*. Maurice Barrès was not far from the place on which I stood, Paul Bourget was nearer, the nearest of all was René Bazin. And one day Henriette Brunhes showed me a book bearing the strange title, *Le Porche de la Deuxieme Vertu*. I did not know the book, did not know the author. It was *Charles Péguy;* Henriette Brunhes brought me for the first time face to face with Charles Péguy. She, in whose veins there was perhaps

not one drop of French blood—her father was a Danish Jew, her mother a German Russian from the Baltic provinces—she was one of the first in France to understand and hail the great Frenchman, who was only fully acknowledged by his compatriots and his country after his heroic death. On my bookshelves I now have the regally beautiful edition of Péguy's complete works, in crown octavo, on real linen paper—and each of the fifteen volumes has an introduction signed with one of the great names of France—Barrès, Bergson, André Suarès, Alexandre Millerand. . . . But from the book by the brothers Tharaud we know what each of Péguy's *Cahiers*, in which these works first saw the light, cost the poet in begging at the doors of benefactors. Why did I not look him up then, in the shop up at the Panthéon? But who would have thought that the writer, who was then only forty years old, would only sixteen months later not be among the living? "Forty is a dreadful age," you wrote yourself, Charles Péguy! *Quarante ans est un âge terrible!* To you it brought death and honour, the crown of thorns and the wreath of laurel. . . .

Jean and Henriette Brunhes introduced me first of all to Georges Goyau, the Catholic historian and sociologist whom I had admired from afar, one of the leaders, in writing and in action, of *Christian democracy*. While very unassuming in his personal tastes, he and his first wife, a daughter of President Félix Faure, resided in an aristocratic flat in the Arc de Triomphe quarter. With sisterly care Madame Brunhes had prepared me—nevertheless I was rather near taking scandal at seeing so much evidence of wealth apparently on quite good terms with just as much Christianity. Madame Lucie Félix Faure-Goyau, a stately woman, the image of her father, was very kind to the Danish duckling, who was soon surrounded by other just as imposing swans. For there was a great assemblage and many ladies; footmen in livery, with stern, clean-shaven faces, carried tea to

the guests—and I dropped my teaspoon on the floor! The host came and kindly picked it up, and then took me into his wife's study (Madame Goyau wrote religious books) to show me an incunabulum, which he knew would be of interest to me as a student of Saint Catherine. I went with him—it was *The Dialogue*, Venezia, 28th April, 1478—I knew the price from the catalogues of dealers in rare editions, it could be counted in thousands. . . .

I felt a little more at ease a few days later at a tea which the Brunhes gave out at Bellevue in the large garden-room, and where a number of literary luminaries assembled to meet *M. Joergensen.* Splendid Jean Brunhes had instructed the barbarian the evening before and explained to him who the guests were. I still remember his boyish, frolicsome gaiety when he mentioned a certain dignified senator—"All you have to do is to work on his emotions; he is content *quand il peut y aller de sa petite larme!*" but with a smile. . . .

"It was in Paris, in the spring of 1914," I wrote many years later, as I collected my impressions from my first and second stay in Emil Hoskier's villa in Bellevue (for I came again in the following year, when I gave a series of lectures in Paris, at the invitation of the Institue Catholique). "It was in Paris, in the spring of 1914"—and the spring of 1913 did not differ very much from it. "Never, perhaps, has the spring in France been more beautiful. It was as if this country, before its flowery meadows were to be furrowed by the trenches, its forests devastated by shells, wanted to show to the full its beauty of May. Never were the clusters of flowers on the horse-chestnuts whiter or more rosy red, never was the grass more golden green, never were the lawns in the parks more closely starred with daisies, never had they a deeper blue of speedwell and forget-me-nots.

"And in that luxuriant spring Paris lived her light, gay life of sunshine. To the stranger, as to Parisians

themselves, all doors and all hearts were open in that May and June. A generation was in flower—the generation which was at time between forty and fifty—and that was my generation."

It was to this generation that I was introduced that afternoon at the reception in Hoskier's villa in Bellevue. Many of the men and women, with whom I shook hands then for the first time, were already well known to me through their works—the small, refined René Bazin—Pierre de Quirielle and his wife, known under the pen name of Jacques de Coussange, who had earned the gratitude of Denmark and especially of South Jutland—the enthusiastic admirer of America, Abbé Felix Klein, and the democratic-Christian veteran, Henri Lorin—the social economist, Imbart de la Tour; the Pascal scholar, Victor Giraud; the modernist philosopher, Abbé Laberthonnière; the editor of *Le Correspondant*, Trogan; the chief secretary of the French Academy, Etienne Lamy—and many more. And, as the Italian proverb says, *di cosa nasce cosa* (one thing leads to another). At a lunch a day or two later at the De Quirielles I made the acquaintance of the art historian, André Pératé, translator of *Fioretti* into French, and an enthusiastic student of everything concerning Francis of Assisi. At another lunch at René Bazin's I was introduced to Taine's niece, Madame Saint-René-Taillandier, and met again the old friend of 1909, Pierre Rivière. Then one day when I was sitting at home alone in Bellevue, Madame Vieillard came up and announced a visitor—"Monsieur Gabriel Thomas." Henriette Brunhes had already told me about him; I knew that he was *dans les affaires*, had made a great deal of money on the building of the Eiffel Tower, that he had a villa not very far from Hoskier's in the *rue des Capucins;* that as a middle-aged man he had returned to the Church. "There are three men," he said himself in the course of our talk, "to whom I owe my conversion: one is dead,

Lamennais, two are living, Maurice Denis and yourself!"

Maurice Denis—I knew quite well who he was. Already in 1904 I had seen, at an exhibition of Christian art in Düsseldorf, the first works of this great painter. I still remembered quite well his *Annunciation*—with the luminous Italian landscape in the background, a motif from Fiesole. Gabriel Thomas now invited me to come over to his villa and see what he possessed of Denis, especially the newly completed wall decoration of the dining-room, *L'Eternel Printemps*—a harmony of white, sky-blue, rose-red and the most delicate May-green. With an introduction from Thomas I then went out a day or two later to Saint Germain-en-Laye to call upon the artist. He had not yet bought his property, *Le Prieuré*, but still lived in a villa almost opposite, on the same sloping land. It was the end of April, the little aristocratic town was in the full flush of spring, lilacs and chestnuts were in bloom, the foliage of the lime trees was light green, of the sycamores bronze brown. Denis welcomed me with the most fraternal kindness—he had in his youth known Mogens Ballin and still corresponded with Jan Verkade. Present at the lunch were André Pératé, also the artist's first wife (who has since died) and all the many children of the artist couple—all the little snub-nosed dolls' heads I knew so well from their father's pictures. . . . After lunch we saw the house, the small, cosy, bright rooms filled with art and books—the garden with its pergola of vine, its rows of flowering marguerites in terra-cotta pots along the low wall, all of it so Italian it seemed to me. "Yes," said Denis, "there is so much about Ile-de-France that reminds one of Tuscany." The visit finished in the studio. I saw, amongst other pictures, that of "Our Lady in the School," which had at one time inspired me to write a poem, a poem which I now had to translate as well as I could in prose. Denis brought out picture after picture,

sketch after sketch—full of wonder and admiration I stood there looking at them, and perhaps looked most of all at that little Frenchman with the blue eyes, the black hair parted in the middle, the round, ruddy cheeks, the short beard on his chin and the shapely head in which all these visions of beauty had their origin.

A day or two later I was sitting in the garden of Bellevue and looking at the view over Paris. My old friend Hoskier had been out to lunch, but had left again immediately after coffee. It was about one o'clock, the thrushes were singing in the big, light-green lime trees, daisies and blue speedwell were flowering in the grass—the speedwell looked so home-like, there were so many of them along the road up to Ordrup Mount, the road from my first home in Charlottenlund up to the d'Auchamps' "Mariabo." In front of the bench on which I was sitting was the hedge of clipped bushes enclosing the garden—the tops of some trees on the slope lower down—the Seine, of which there was just a glimpse behind the foliage, and beyond the Seine the poplars along the opposite bank of the river. Then came the large, pink roofs in Billancourt—smoking factory chimneys—and behind them Paris. Paris in sunshine, Paris in shadow, Paris in smoke, and furthest away in fog Paris with the *Tour Eiffel*, the "Great Wheel," the two church-like towers of the Trocadéro, some church domes scattered over the sixteenth and eighteenth arrondissements and furthest away, Montmartre and the shining basilica in a gleam of sunshine.

This I sat looking at. I thought of all the admirable people I had become acquainted with during this stay in Paris. In the morning I had had a visit from a young man who told me that he had studied law, taken his doctor's degree, had been a free-thinker—that a soul-crisis had of a sudden made him feel the nothingness of everything—that my book, *Our Lady of Denmark*, which he had read in German during a stay in the Rhineland,

had shown him what path he ought to take in life—"and now, on July 29th, I am to say my first Mass!" This visit I had received. And that morning I had received a letter from Henriette Brunhes, who was now back in Fribourg, in which she said: "To me it seems as though I saw in the distance a whole nation of souls to whom *you* are to bring light and comfort. On every side I see how your books have the effect of deliverance and help—how young men and young women, who stand in need of getting out of the old system of formulæ, breathe the air of a newborn Christianity in your writings, refreshing and vivid like yourself. It is for the sake of all these souls that you must go on persevering—that you must keep on your way through the darkness, carrying in your wounded hands the little lamp giving light to all of those (and they are many) who—in the words of the prophet—*roam from one sea to another seeking the words of the eternal and not finding it, all the young men and young women who are dying of thirst*" (Amos viii, 12, 13).

Those were beautiful words, that my distant friend sent me—and could I wish for any better task in life? But there in the grass stood the blue speedwell and looked at me with its blue eyes. And on the bench, beside the letter from Fribourg, lay another letter, with a *Danish* stamp, and speaking a wholly different language. . . . Although I knew it almost by heart I took it out again and read it. . . Yes, it was true—I *had* advised economy—but I *had* also sent money! My Belgian friends, above all Monseigneur Deploige and Professor Thièry, had stood by me in the most generous way—I took out my little account book and found that in March I had sent or caused to be sent home 1192 kroner, in April 1390 kroner, in May 1300 kroner—amounts which seemed to me to be considerable, but which proved never to be sufficient. A day or two ago I had received a telegram which was like a cry of distress: "Must have . . . . kroner before Saturday." I had re-

ceived that kind of telegram before and Hoskier had kindly come to my assistance. But to-day at lunch he had said "No," and had driven away displeased.

There I sat, then, with the letter from Fribourg—and the letter from Denmark. . . A similar letter had reached me in Cannes—with that in my pocket I had visited Avignon (for the sake of Saint Catherine) and had made a pilgrimage to Paray-le-Monial.

It was one day in the beginning of April that I came to Paray—once a little unknown town in Burgundy, where during the years 1673 to 1675, the nun Marguerite Marie Alacoque received the revelations on which rests the Catholic devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus—now one of the three great places of pilgrimage in France (Lourdes and Ars are the two others). In the morning I had visited the pilgrimage church and spent some time at the shrine of Marguerite-Marie, but had not received any particular impression. In the afternoon—the weather was dull and chilly like a spring day in Denmark, in the gardens the gooseberry bushes were light green—I had walked outside the town, and out in a field amongst willow trees with catkins I had found a small convent and had gone into the church attached to it.

It was one of the churches of the so-called *Colettines* I had found. The Colettines are the strictest section of the Poor Clares—the Order of Saint Clare of Assisi, reformed in the fourteenth century (i.e. restored to its original austerity) by Saint Colette of Corbie in the north of France (Corbie—the birthplace of *Ansgar !*)

Everything in the little chapel was therefore of extreme Franciscan simplicity. A common vaulted church ; the nave with three arches ; two small side chapels. Yellow lime-washed walls ; a floor of wooden boards ; seats of brown wood ; three brown-painted wooden altars. Even the sanctuary lamp was of (polished) wood. Poverty—Francis of Assisi's voluntary, joyous poverty !

I was alone in the church, sat a long while on a bench and fell a-thinking. In my pocket lay the letter—I took it out and read it there, in the presence of God. Looked about me as though seeking counsel, listened, as though for a voice. On a bench beside me lay one of the little books of devotion bound in black cloth, which one always finds where there are nuns. Generally there is a button sewn on to the black cloth and an eye crocheted on the other side, with which to close the book when not in use. I took up the book, opened it—in books which you find in lonely churches you often find a message for yourself. This was a so-called book of contemplations—*Méditations pieuses pour chaque jour de l'année*. Many books of that kind are published in France —I did not even notice the name of the author. I opened the book ; I wanted to take an omen—thus had Francis of Assisi and Bernard of Quintavalle one day opened the Missal in the church of San Niccolo in Assisi. . . And I read :

"So long as I am not completely convinced that the guidance of God at every moment of my life is absolutely *good*, so long do I still lack something in my faith, my trust, my love, and consequently in the full surrender of myself. I must, therefore, pray for the grace to obtain a fervent gratitude of all that God sends me, and in particular for all the painful means He bestows upon me to atone for my own sins and the sins of others. I must, moreover, resolve to offer up all that I suffer for the intention for which God wishes me to suffer."

I copied out these words in my pocket-book down in Paray-le-Monial ; I took them out and read them again here on the bench in Hoskier's garden. I knew this teaching—I knew it was the true one. *Tout ce qui arrive est adorable*, Léon Bloy had said too, "in regard to everything that happens there is only one thing to be done : to adore !" But it was easy to write that. It was also easy to read it. It was difficult to *live* it and to *suffer* it.

I returned to my two rooms under the roof in Professor Thiery's house in the Place Sainte Gertrude, but not this time either was I to stay there long. My friend Deploige wished me to go to Siena again and continue the studies of the life of Saint Catherine which had begun during the previous summer.

THOU PARADISE OF EXILES, ITALY!

E venni del martiro a questa pace.—DANTE.

"And from my torment I came unto this peace."
Et nul, s'il ne sort du grain, ne sera l'épi.—CLAUDEL.

"And none shall grow into an ear, unless he grow out of the grain."

I

IN the evening of October 31st, All Saints' Eve, I came to Feldkirch. Feldkirch is situated in Vorarlberg, midway between the Tyrol and Switzerland, a kind of mean proportional between the two mountain countries. The inhabitants are Catholics; at the side of roads and paths, as in Upper Bavaria, stand crucifixes. The landscape is now romantic, now idyllic; although it was late in the year I saw from the train cattle still grazing in the broad meadows. Green rivers—the Ill, the Samina—rush through wildly rugged clefts. The Rhine is not far away and from high points there is a view of the Swabian inland sea and beyond its clear blue the shining snow peaks—Säntis of Sceffel's "Ekkehard" and of the days of *Le Livre de la Route*—and Nietzsche's Scesapiana

At the station Monsignor Waitz stood expecting me. As we had agreed upon the year before, when I journeyed home from Belgrade and Venice to keep my birthday, he welcomed me with a cordial "Du." I knew the history of my ecclesiastical friend—I knew that he had been healed as though by a miracle of a disease of long standing, and that out of gratitude he had resolved

to devote his life to works of charity. In the previous year I had visited the home for crippled and incurable children which he had founded—"das Jesuheim." I still remembered the ward for the blind—a blind little girl in a railed cot—a blind, half-grown boy whose eyelids were sunk over the empty eye-sockets—and above all, ah! above all the repellent, hydrocephalous abortion—the kind-hearted Sister was in tears when showing it to us—red, inflamed eyes—a mouth that was always crying and showing the poor little teeth—"das Kind der Sünde"—a loose woman in Meran had brought it into the world.

"You must be happy," I said in the evening to my bishop friend. "What you are doing is worth more than all my writing." As soon as I had said it, I knew that here was the answer to the complaint of the literary and artistic inferiority of modern Catholicism made by Huysmans, Karl Muth, myself and many others. In my diary I wrote: "In view of the great distress of the modern world the Church must necessarily lay most stress on *Caritas*—she cannot afford to do anything else. Fruits are needed—not flowers. Catholic education, therefore, as given in the schools and colleges of the Jesuits and other teaching Orders, is directed mainly, one might say one-sidedly, at the training of *character*, while *feeling* and *imagination* are neglected. The result: we write fewer novels and poorer verses than the others —but we show our strength in nursing lepers. Modern Catholicism is not brilliantly intellectual and does not seem spiritual—for its spirit is another than that of the world—its spirit (as I recently read in an article on Enrica Handel-Mazzetti) is 'that sweet spirit which created our saints, the spirit of the love of Jesus Christ' —the spirit of faith, which is also the true human spirit resting in God."

After a rest of a couple of days in my big, old-fashioned room in the big, old-fashioned episcopal residence, I

went with my friend to Brizen, where I had promised to give a lecture. I spoke about Denmark—afterwards there was a question hour, and to the best of my ability I answered the questions put to me about my distant country. Without any arrangement on my part the lecture happened to be given on my birthday. There was to be a festive gathering in the evening, but before that I managed to go for a walk alone. Brizen is situated in a valley, the Alps rising about it on every side. I went outside the town; the half moon stood low over the mountains, the white snow peaks gleamed like moon-white clouds, the river Eisack roared. I stood a long while looking up at the familiar stars. Orion was in the ascendant—one of its big, bright stars hung just above the dark, uppermost ridge of the mountain forest. Forty-seven years ago the person now standing here and looking at stars lay wrapped in a cradle in Bagergade in Svendborg, and his mother contemplated her first-born. . . .

Then I went back to the town and to the friends who wanted to give me pleasure. And if I had had any doubts about it, it was made known to me that evening that the Catholic spirit is also "the true human spirit." Round about me sat the good, Tyrolese Catholics, priests and layfolk—on the table stood the red wine of the Tyrol—and the songs of the Tyrol resounded in the room. There I heard for the first time the touching folk-song about the dead bridegroom—about the three flowers to which the bride compares her loved one—first gentian ("blue like that were my dear one's eyes")—then rose ("red like that were my darling's lips")—finally eidelweiss ("pale like that were my darling's cheeks the last time I looked upon him").

It was "der Gletscherpfarrer" who sang—but why was he called "der Gletscherpfarrer?" It was because his parish was right up in the snow and the ice—and once he had had to let himself be lowered down in the cleft of a

glacier to take the Sacrament to one of his parishioners who lay dying at the bottom.

But this evening "der Gletscherpfarrer" was not thinking of these things—he took a drink of the good, red wine and sang a merry ballad in the Kürntner dialect.

Other songs followed—the Tyrol has no lack of them. After the song about the right kind of love came the scoffing ditty about "der Sie-Mann," the "she-man," the husband who tries in vain to please his wife. The more gently he behaves, the more compliant he is, the more wildly does she rage—in the vain hope that he will at last maintain his rights over her and chastise her. Nowhere is there any consolation to be had for the poor "Sie-Mann." The sturdy neighbour only answers contemptuously: "Weshalb bist du ein Weibesknecht?"[1] And the priest takes his Bible down from the shelf and reads to him the old words spoken by God to Adam: "*Because thou didst listen to the voice of the woman* the earth shall be cursed and shall bring forth thorns and thistles . . . ."

But at the last glass the song about parting was sung and they all joined in it. Then I heard for the last time the note of old romantic Germany:

Zieh' hinaus beim Morgengrau'n
will das Dorf verlassen,
schlummermüde Sterne schau'n
nieder auf die Gassen;
trag mein Bündel wanderleer,
doch mich drückt's wie Eisen—
wenn das Herze tränenschwer,
ist so schwer das Reisen.

Sink vor'm Kreuz hin, das im Feld
an den Baum sich lehnet,
weis kein Herz auf dieser Welt,
das nach mir sich sehnet.

[1] "Why do you let yourself get hen-pecked?"

Bet' und bete ohne Sinn
kann's ja nimmer fassen,
wie ich unglückselig bin,
seit du mich verlassen.

Schliesst dereinst mein Auge sich,
ruh'n die müde Hände,
will ich noch vom Himmel dich
segnen ohne Ende ;
brauch'st nicht Thränen mir zu weih'n
kann vergessen werden,
mögest du nur glücklich sein
immer hier auf Erden.

There was a mood in it as in Moritz von Schwind's picture "Leaving Home at Dawn"—the youth with his knapsack on his back and his staff in his hand opening the door of his home for the last time and stepping across the threshold . . . one more look back at the familiar farmyard with all the dear, familiar, humble objects—the chopping block, the saw-jack, the pump—and a glance up at the window, from which no one is waving a farewell—because it is very early—the silver sickle of the morning moon is still standing bright behind the dark firs . . .

For the last time I had listened to "des Knaben Wunderhorn."

II

I began my forty-eighth year by again crossing the Italian frontier. Once more I travelled "hinein"—away beyond all the blue mountains.

Amongst my fellow-travellers there was a young, married woman, a Viennese, who between Bozen and Trentino gave me the benefit of her views on marriage. "My husband is faithful to me—that is, every man must of course have a cultivated and beautiful woman friend !"

She was very good-looking herself, quoted Maeterlinck and d'Annunzio and thus seemed well qualified to fill the rôle of friend to another woman's husband. Opposite to her a North German of about sixty, with a face that was still young and genial, was expounding his philosophy of life. "Gefühl," "Liebe," etc., were pronounced to be "sheer madness." "And if any one should say to me, 'To-morrow you will die!' I would answer: 'Why bother about dinner to-day, then?'" The Viennese lady shuddered and the Prussian went on to shock her still further: "Everything is only force and matter! The soul—madness! And as for my carcase, so far as I am concerned you can make mincemeat of it, but don't forget the flavouring!" That too, was Germany, and alas! another than the romantic one. . .

In the evening I arrived in Verona and looked up my hotel of earlier days, the Accademia. After supper I went out. In a little street near Piazza d'Erba there were some steps down to one of the small, Romanesque churches, half underground, which I remembered so well from old times. It was still open—I nearly fell down through the doorway, so impossible was it to see where one was going, and fell right in to a congregation saying the Rosary. The church was still decorated with the black, silver-fringed draperies of All Souls' Day, the silver tissue gleamed dully in the light of a couple of candles on the altar. I found a place in one of the darkest corners; round about me the rosary prayers went on, I got out my beads too—I had bought them in Bornhofen four years earlier—and gave myself up to the dear, familiar cradle-song which I had first heard in the little church in La Rocca—"blessed art thou among women and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus." In my corner I joined in the prayer to Her whom "all generations shall call blessed"—prayed with my unknown brothers and sisters in the one and the same faith, happy and thankful that now I was at home. . .

At four o'clock in the morning on November 8th I got out at the station Santa Maria Novella in Florence and changed into the train going to Pisa. An hour later I changed again, at Empoli. And now I drew near the goal of my journey—I was in the Elsa valley—at six o'clock day dawned at Poggibonsi. The perfectly pure and clear morning sky stood blue with a solitary silver star above the semi-light hills ; a stone-pine was silhouetted black against the air. Faintly golden was the morning flush above the blue mountains of Chianti, the fields were grey with dew and mists were rising from the river Elsa flowing down below alongside the railway line in its gorge between oaks and poplars. A thin fog was rising and beginning to veil the heights.

I sat by the window, alone in the carriage and saw and saw. I could not doubt any more—it was really true—I was coming back to the town which I had left last autumn and which I had feared more than once that I should never see again.

While the train hurried on towards Siena, passing Castellina in Chianti, I saw la Montagnuola's forest-clad heights rising in the morning haze and knew that in a moment there would be the tunnel through Monte Magno and then the stop at Mont' Arioso. After that it would be Siena—as all this was becoming clear and joyous reality to me, I said Dante's words in the fifteenth Canto of *Paradiso :*

> Delivered from a world deceiving
> Which it is the soul's death to cling to,
> I came from torment unto this peace.

III

Two people were waiting for me in Siena—my friend Padre Felice Spee—and the young Danish theologian, Peter Schindler.

In July 1912 Padre Felice, whom I had last seen in Loreto, had been moved thence to Siena as Guardian of the humble little monastery next to the beautiful Gothic basilica San Francesco. During my lonely summer of work in Siena he had been my chief associate—in my book *Beyond all the Blue Mountains* I have, *inter alia*, related our eventful journey together to San Galgano. During the long period of residence in Italy he had almost shed his Dutch origin—in all ways of thinking and feeling he had become Italianised, Latinised. On my return now, in November 1913, I found again all my Saint Catherine literature and other materials which I had left in his care.

Peter Schindler I had met for the first time on that festive evening in Grundtvig's House—since then we had met several times at Mogens Ballin's. He too, wanted a wider horizon than Denmark—nothing was therefore more natural than that we should travel together from Copenhagen to Louvain. He then continued alone his travels of discovery in Catholic Europe—first in Belgium, then along the Rhine to Switzerland, after that to Rome and now he was expecting me in Siena before he again set his course northwards.

A glance at the manuscript of my book about Saint Catherine, which I had left in Padre Felice's care, showed me how superficially and hastily I had proceeded last year. Most of it had to be done over again altogether.

First of all I had to complete my knowledge about all the places in which the Siennese saint had lived. I had been in Avignon. I knew fairly well Siena and its nearest surroundings—Belcaro, Lecceto, San Leonardo al Lago, Pontignano. I had also been to Mont' Oliveto. But I still needed Val d'Orcia, low down south of Siena, beneath Mont' Amiata—Val d'Orcia, where Catherine had journeyed on foot for so long from town to town and from castle to castle to make peace, and in this war with the Evil One had had her headquarters in the castle of

the Salimbeni, Rocca di Tentennano. It was already late in the year, the weather was unsettled, the days short. Nevertheless, I decided to set out, and Schindler came with me.

We started at two o'clock in the afternoon of November 11th, a hasty march-out, for we made up our minds suddenly—I believe Schindler's entire equipment consisted of a comb and a pipe—on his head he had a student's cap with the Danish cockade. . . . We went by train in the direction of Chiusi, down through that strange desert country called *la Creta*—nothing but grey and yellow clay hills, cracked by the sun, furrowed by rains, formed by wind, bare, naked and cold, only here and there some poor corn, a cypress or a patch of clover field, which in May covers the bitter nakedness of the desert with its purple-hued flowers. . . .

It was not the first time I had seen the *Creta* country. In 1906 I had travelled through it with my wife, on the way home from our journey to Naples, after the eruption of Vesuvius. We were coming from Rome and when we changed trains in Chiusi it was already dark night. But the moon came up, and in the moonlight we looked out across this fantastic, rugged, weirdly pallid country, which looked most of all like a landscape on an extinct planet. Far away in the horizon stood two big stars—I thought of Giovanni Colombini, whose life I had recounted in *The Sacred Fire*, and of Catherine Benincasa, whose history I was already then thinking of writing. We spent the night in Siena. But I was not yet worthy to *stay* in that city, which in the old days was honoured with the name of *Civitas Virginis*, "the city of the Blessed Virgin." Madonna shut me out from her protecting cloak, and I left the city. . . .

Seven years had gone by since then, and again there was Siena's desert, again there was *la Creta*. A long time had passed before I found my way back to Giovanni

Colombini's and Catherine Benincasa's country. But now I was there not to leave it any more. . . .

Schindler and I made the first stop at Montepulciano. When we had found our hotel, taken our rooms, had supper and gone out, it was moonlight. And when we had walked a few steps down through one of the streets, lying half in black shadow, half in shining white light, a procession with torches came towards us and we heard a mumbling sound of prayers—*Miserere*. . . . "What is that?" asked Schindler, who had never before seen a funeral in Italy. We followed the dead to the chapel of the Brothers of *Misericordia*—we went into the chapel, amongst the hooded brothers with the flaming candles. The priest sprinkled holy water, shrouded the bier in incense. . . . Then the lid was taken from the coffin for the last time (as I had seen it done in Siena, and as it is the custom all over Tuscany); in the light from the torches the small, wizened face of an old woman could be seen. "You have seen that she is dead?" asked the Prior. From the Brothers' hoods, with the big, round eye-holes, came the answer: *Tanto!*

Then we went out of the town—down to the roads where the moonlight was whitest. We came past Sangallo's masterpiece, San Biagio—only Bramante's Santa Maria della Consolazione at Todi is purer Renaissance. And we walked—out in the moonlight—as one usually does only when one is twenty. There was a high wind, the trees at the roadside roared like breakers in a storm—before us, beneath us, lay the vast plain in the moonlight, with its three lakes: *Lago di Montepulciano*, *Lago di Chiusi*, *Lago di Trasimeno*—over yonder Umbria began, over yonder was Assisi! Before we were aware of it the road had brought us back to the town—we climbed up past huge, cyclopean walls, by stairs, beneath arcades, all so lonely and desolate. Brighter and brighter shone the moon, no one else was stirring outside any longer, only we kept on strolling about, intoxicated by the

moonlight. At last we fell into a long talk and a still longer silence, sitting somewhere on a stone bench in the shadow, just opposite the moon-bright façade of an old palace—inside the palace, behind the closed shutters, between the slats of which only a little golden light peeped out, someone was playing the violin—in long and plaintive, deeply mournful notes, that turned in our hearts like a sword in a wound. . . .

Next morning I was up at seven and stood at my window. It was still blowing—the wind sighed in the white and yellow flowers in the garden, the vegetable beds flickered like water. Over the garden wall I looked down at the white road which last night had shone with such enchanted light, and looked out across the great country that was green with pastures, silver-grey with olive-fields, black-spotted with cypresses. Some serious-looking peasant farms—a stone-pine or two on a hill at a convent—then in a haze the more distant plain with the dark blue Lago Montepulciano, the pewter grey Lago Chiusi, the grey Lago Trasimeno beneath a coast of haze-veiled mountains.

During the morning we saw the convent of Saint Agnes, where Saint Catherine used to go in and out—we bought ourselves each a woollen scarf, for the wind was bitterly cold and we were to drive in an open carriage —then we were off. The automobile from Montepulciano to Torrenieri had not yet come into existence then ; we had to make use of a less rapid and convenient mode of travelling. On the way we saw Pienza, the old Corsignano, the birthplace of Pope Pius II, and then drove towards San Quirico. The white road led through olive groves, but round about were the *Creta* hills, in front Mont' Amiata rose dark blue and threatening against the early glow of evening, and to the left of Mont' Amiata stood Radicofani's isolated cone, like a sentry by the road leading to Rome—the road by which Catherine had travelled five centuries and a half ago. . . .

Besides Radicofani the driver pointed out to us, yonder Montalcino, over on the mountain side—and here Montichiello. . . . Giovanni Colombini's beloved disciple Vanni came from Montechiello, he about whose ecstatic illness I had written in *The Sacred Fire*. . . .

Towards evening the carriage rolled in between the paved and re-echoing streets of San Quirico and stopped at the market-place in front of the *Albergo dell' Orcia*. Of all Italian Albergos—it is impossible to use the international word *Hotel*—that of San Quirico is assuredly amongst the most comfortable. In the large kitchen there is a crackling fire on the hearth—next the kitchen a small, well-closed dining-room with windows high up—you sit in a corner, at a table with a coarse but clean cloth—from the wall Umberto and Margherita look down at you in oil prints—and while you eat your good *pasta* with tomato sauce, the spit before the great fireplace is turning a row of fieldfares or a quail, and on the table, in its stand, there is a big *fiasco* with ruby-red Chianti. . . . There are only few rooms, but they are good—with raftered ceilings, brick floors and big, clean beds. From the window there is a view to the small Piazza—to the well with three openings in the stone lid—a church on the left—and just opposite, the large villa garden of the Chigi family.

After supper Pietro and I again went out, and again it was moonlight, dazzlingly white, overwhelming, appalling moonlight. We went out of the town, past the small Lombard church of Santa Maria, out of Porta Cappucini. For a moment we stopped outside the gate, where the road goes down between olive trees that soughed in the wind ; it was so clear that I could make a sketch in my pocket-book of the gate and one of the big cypresses beside it. A long way down the road a man was coming up towards the town, singing a stornello. We went past him, down towards the cypress avenue, where it stops—and then the wild, desolate *Creta* coun-

try, deadly pale in the moonlight, lay open before us. There was a stillness of death over the endless country—only from far, far away came the sound of a cart creaking along. Without saying anything to each other we went on walking—by a road which I have never since been able to find again. Not until the moon was so high in the heavens that we knew it must be midnight did we stop—and then saw a little way off a white building—like a church or a chapel. . . . And it *was* a church! Climbing up some steps we reached a whitewashed arcade in front of the church façade—on either side of the door there was a brick bench. We sat down there and Schindler—no, Pietro, as he is called in Italy, and as I too preferred to call him—began to speak. . . .

He told me about his first meeting with me—not personally, but in a book, my old book, *Moods*—that little piece of prose about the "innermost soul of the world". . . For it had happened to him too to be twenty years old and to walk home late at night and hear the rain raining over the dark linden trees with a sound as of the everlasting wandering steps of thousands of invisible feet. . . . To him, too, it had happened to stop, alone on the dark, wet road—a villa road in Frederiksberg—and alone, in the midst of the furtive sound of falling drops in the rainy night, to feel himself face to face with the innermost soul of the world—and to flee from its sinister countenance home to his low-roofed human dwelling. . . .

"It was one winter afternoon up at the University library," said Pietro, "that I read that page of *Moods*—and I could not read on, it took such hold of me. From the book my glance slid out through the window—down in the courtyard there was snow—the linden trees stood black and bare—and old Scharling[1] was trudging home, in goloshes and with an umbrella. . . . Then an evening or two later it happened that the usual friends

[1] A professor at the University.

met in my room, my small circle, 'the four-leaved clover,' we used to call it. . . . We sat in my room—the two Holgers, Sven Aage and I: Holger the first, as we used to call him, who had not yet got over his time at sea—Sven Aage, who was blindly wandering on the edge of muddy abysses—Holger the second, who had read verses to us about a forest where *she* lived, a forest that flamed—a forest which had a lake like *her eyes*—a lake that wept against the shore towards evening, and the shore was covered with downtrodden lilies and broken stalks, whose white chalices lay tossing in the mud. . . . There we sat—there they sat . . . there I sat—I, who was sinking in the mire of useless thoughts—I, who was no longer able to pour new wine into the cracked leather bottles of theology. . . . We were seventeen, eighteen, twenty years old—discouraged, tired, full of hate. . . . One morning yet of scoffing sunshine—and then to the deuce! What was the use of it all. We had worked honestly enough—if nobody would answer our questions perhaps it did not matter!

"It was, as I said, an evening or two after I had found *you* in the University library—just as old Scharling was going across the courtyard in goloshes and with an umbrella. I had borrowed *Moods* to take home with me—the others did not believe in you yet—were you a new make-believe?—a new form for the old well-known nonsense!

"I read—and read again. And there was a very great silence.

"And then we had all found what we were seeking When we got up to stretch our legs and fill our pipe we were all four of us changed. What did the world matter to us, then—if such things existed. . . .

"You were ourselves—and yet another. And that was good. For one's own story is never so interesting as somebody else's.

"And a time came for us of verse—a time of exultation.

Even a weeping December morning became beautiful—its pale, evening sun of brass, which before had depressed us, was kind to us now. We filled every cell, every pore of ourselves with you—perhaps we went mad—but now we knew the words which gave a voice to what we had only perceived before, in a silence that hurt. A few days before I had written to one of the quartette: 'There is a roaring, a seething and a simmering in my soul, and the wind is weaving spells in the trees of my garden, and the sleeting rain is weeping for compassion and I weep with it, I disappear with it—and yet a voice is calling me, a voice that I know and yet do not know. What is it, friend? If you can help me at all, tell me or come to me.' Thus had I written but a few days before—and the others came to me and said the same. Now—now we only seized upon one of your verses and sang ourselves to the bottom of it.

"That was how it was at home—on *your* villa roads.

"And now, shortly before you came down here, I was sitting one morning at my window in Via San Martino and looking out across that Siena to which you have led me—which a book of yours has taught me to love—I was sitting at my window, so happy that I could sing for joy, and looking out at this confused mass of roofs and windows and arches and summits and small blue columns of smoke rising from chimneys, at the *Mangia* tower giddily high up in the blue sky, and highest up top the Cathedral, like a shining dream. Above me, before me, stood the sky, blue like the background in a majolica by Della Robbia, with clouds like thin banks of white sand. And I can go to Mass, I can pray to Our Lady—I have a crucifix on my table, I have holy water in the earthenware font by the door-lintel. And when I am loosed from the bonds which are still holding me, I shall set forth for Rome and be sanctified, be made learned, be made a priest. . . .

"Look, all that has been brought about by *you*. With-

out knowing it, without intending it. Simply by *being*, simply by *going on before*. I tell you this on my own behalf, on behalf of my friends, on behalf of many; you made *whole* human beings of us! I tell you this—and many others could say so too. Many do say it, all over the world—only you do not know it. . . ."

Pietro ceased speaking. Before the closed door of the church we said our night prayers. As we came away he said: "This is *our* church—*chiesa nostra*. Here I will come and say my first Mass."

IV

Next morning we went on—away from *la Creta*, into *Val d'Orcia*. We visited Ospedaletto, once a hostel kept by the Dominicans, where Catherine had been a guest when on her wanderings—we saw Castiglione d'Orcia—and, finally, just opposite this little town, Rocca d'Orcia, the mighty ruins of the castle of the Salimbeni. "No traces of this once famous castle remain to-day," I had read in Edmund Gardner's book about the Siennese saint.[1] Apparently Mr. Gardner has not looked, for there are considerable remains still left.

In the Middle Ages the castle was called *l'Isola*, "the island"; Catherine therefore writes in one of her letters written there: "I am sitting on the island, and there is a storm on every side. There was also a storm of wind on the day that Pietro drove up the steep mountain road; the wind, which had followed us persistently on all the journey, had risen to a downright hurricane. Round about us there was a roaring in the huge oaks with a sound like rattling metal—of corybantic, noisy bacchic instruments. At a bend in the road the gale rose to such violence that it seemed as if our frail vehicle must be hurled out into space. "Pietro!" I shouted with the full strength of my lungs to make myself heard

[1] Gardner: *Saint Catherine of Siena*, London 1907 (p. 214).

"Pietro, in a few minutes we shall be driving off the road and driving straight into heaven!"

But we reached the top—got out of the carriage—climbed over a railed gate shaking in the gale so that it was dangerous to life, and entered upon the enclosed castle grounds. Tall thuya bushes tossed in the wind, big red daisies glowed in the grass, still luxuriant and green. We crawled as high up among the ruins as we could get, and stood at last, bareheaded and with flying coats and with a feeling that in a moment our hair would fly off our heads, at the top of the great tower—*il maschio*. The sun broke out, and down below us was the vast, wide view: Montichiello, Montepulciano, Monte Cetona, Radicofani—the great, broad Val d' Orcia, the baths of Vignone, the bridge by which we had come across the river, the road to San Quirico by which we had come here. Down on the plain lay Ospedaletto, over towards Pienza undulated the elephant grey *Creta* desert. The storm growled about us, came near to pulling us down, roared and seethed in the strong thuya bushes by which we held on.

Then the sun went down in a sea of gold behind purplish violet mountains. The grey mountain ridges took on a colour of amethyst. And in a sun gleam stood a luminous town in the horizon—a town with shining white towers—*Siena*, twenty-six kilomètres away—Siena with the Mangia tower and the campanile of the cathedral—SIENA!

"Now you are in your kingdom, Giovanni," cried Pietro through the storm.

A HUNDREDFOLD

Quel dolce Cento.—CATHERINE OF SIENA

AN autumn morning in Assisi, at half-past seven, sunshine coming in at my bedroom window—autumn mists, thin and white, over the plain. . . . I dress, and a little later stand on the balcony outside my window. From the sunny, silver-grey roofs of Assisi a fine, blue smoke ascends, drifting away flat and low down. Before me, beneath me, I see a row of low houses with roofs of semi-circular, faded, shallow tiles—then Porta San Francesco with its battlemented walls and the old city arms above the arched gateway—then the square before San Pietro and the glorious Romanesque façade of rose-red stone of this old church, its dome and tiles and its square campanile from which the bells are just now ringing jubilantly for Mass. Behind San Pietro the town is beginning to be veiled in the autumn haze—the red roof of the new convent of the French Poor Clares glows through it—but I glimpse as though behind water only the old houses opposite Borgo San Pietro, with the golden autumn foliage of little withered gardens in between and the slowly ascending columns of smoke. The towers on Santa Chiara, Santa Maria del Vescovado and Sant' Apollinare loom faintly down the edge of the town against the blue ridge of Monte Subasio, but out over the country there is nothing but line behind line of haze-shrouded hills and banks which at last fade away in a white, luminous cloud hanging on to the mounta side. The air is strong, cold and crisp—the bells in San

Pietro keep on rejoicing—in the street below me a woman's voice is singing. . . .

Then there is a knock at my door and Jan Ballin, the son of Mogens Ballin, comes in dressed for walking. A short while after we go out of Porta San Francesco together, down the road to Ponte San Vittorino—the road I once walked on so often with Mogens Ballin—the road to La Rocca. We too are going to La Rocca, for Jan is a newly-ordained priest; Jan is going to say Mass in Padre Felice's church, at the altar which his father adorned—a Mass in commemoration of the two dear ones who are fallen asleep—*nella 'Santa memoria*—as the disciples of Catherine of Siena used to write over their letters after the death of the saint. . . .

All the way along there are dear and holy memories. . . . "Here is Palazzo, where your father came and found me and brought me home on a donkey's back. Here is the churchyard of Petrignano, where Padre Felice always said a *De Profundis* when we drove past . . . and there, ahead, up in the mountains, Jan, where you see those little grey houses half-way down the mountain side—you see the monastery up above and the façade of the church —I can even see the green door—that is La Rocca. . . ."

Then we come up through the winding and twisting streets of La Rocca, where it is still cold and raw after the night and the fog. From more than one window we receive a welcome—women come out in the doorways and, why, there is still old Mariano, Angeluccio's and Rosina's foster-father, older and more bearded than thirty years ago, but with a glance as bright and vivid as ever and just as cordial a smile: "That is your son, Signor Giovanni?" "No, it is Signor Francesco's son, Mariano. And he is a priest and has come out here to say Mass!" "Signor Francesco's son!" stammers old Mariano, and the tears choke his voice. . . .

We walk the last steps up towards the monastery and the church. There is the church square, pushing out in

a semi-circular bastion. We walk round its foot—walk up a couple of steps, and then stand before the two doors—the door to Padre Felice's church and the door to Signor Francesco's and Signor Giovanni's monastery. The church door is shut—we knock at the monastery porch—three knocks with the old knocker. Steps are heard within—and who should open the door, but Angeluccio himself! My fine, slender, nineteen-year-old Angeluccio of the days of *Le Livre de la Route* is now a grey-haired man—but he is still fine and slender, and the old friendship shines from his good, blue eyes—*Signor Giovanni!* But his eyes grow misty when he learns who the young priest is—and he stoops and kisses the consecrated hand of Signor Francesco's son. . . .

Then he goes before us to announce us to Padre Felice's successor as parish priest in La Rocca—Padre Bonaventura Rughi—an old Italian. Meanwhile we sit down on some planks lying against the wall in the cloister on the left. We sit silent, looking about us. There stands a blue-painted cart—there some harvest implements are lying—yonder some tiles have been stacked on the wall round the little garden in the middle of the monastery courtyard. The garden is untidy, is running wild—tall dill is growing up round a couple of small fruit trees and some meagre vines. Behind the garden is the white wing of the monastery in which we lived in Padre Felice's time—I see the open arcades below—up above the arches are closed with windows—more practical, less beautiful. Between the church and the monastery runs a low wall, above which can be seen the tops of olive trees waving softly against a white and blue cloud sky. It is very quiet—I hear Angeluccio speaking inside the house and Padre Rughi's voice answering. A pigeon flies with a faint smack of wings across the courtyard and perches in the niche of a window. So it was when Signor Francesco and I lived

here together—so it is now as I sit here with his grown-up son. . . .

Angeluccio comes back—there is no objection—the Danish *Reverendo* can say Mass. Then the wonder comes to pass—we go into the church of La Rocca together, Francesco's son and I, as once I and Francesco. We open the low door leading from the courtyard into the church, we go down the little narrow steps, then we are before the altar—that altar from which it all went forth, where it was all begun, to which it all returns to-day. . . . A few minutes' silence—then Jan Ballin goes into the sacristy and vests for Mass, Angeluccio attending to his wants. And I remain alone. Alone in Padre Felice's church, alone before the altar which Francesco Mogens Ballin adorned. . . . I look at the big, slightly irregular letters of the inscription: *Tuam crucem adoramus, Domine*—at the Franciscan coat-of-arms under the altar table, at the old crucifix hanging up under the vaulting; I still remember the day when Mogens stood repairing it outside in the cloister—remember it as if it were yesterday and not as if it were a generation ago, and I the only one left of the three friends of La Rocca.

Then Jan Ballin comes in from the sacristy—by the same door by which I once saw Padre Felice come—and vested like Padre Felice, with the Roman biretta on his head, in the priestly vestments, carrying the paten and the chalice, ready to offer up the bloodless sacrifice of the new Covenant. . . . A large sign of the cross, and the Mass begins. Presently I hear the words of the Introit—the thirty-seventh psalm: "The mouth of a just man shall meditate wisdom, and his tongue shall speak judgment. The law of his God is in his heart; and his steps shall not be supplanted. . . . Expect the Lord and keep his way; and he will exalt thee to inherit the land. The salvation of the just is from the Lord, and he is their protector in the time of trouble. And the Lord will help them and deliver them; and he will

rescue them from the wicked and save them, because they have hoped in him."

I follow the text of the Mass in my book. Now come the collects; I hear Jan adding the prayer for the departed—I hear the names *Felix* and *Franciscus*—that Thou, O Lord, wilt lead thy servants Felice and Francesco into the land of peace and light and to communion with all the saints." Then comes the Gospel, from the nineteenth chapter of St. Matthew:

"At that time Peter said to Jesus: Behold, we have left all things, and have followed thee, what therefore shall we have? And Jesus said to them, Amen I say to you, every one that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall possess life everlasting."

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